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# Saskatchewan HISTORY

★ The Saskatchewan  
Relief Commission

BY

BLAIR NEATBY

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BY

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# Saskatchewan History

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## *Contents*

THE SASKATCHEWAN RELIEF COMMISSION, 1931-1934.....	Blair Neatby	41
TALES OF WESTERN TRAVELLERS.....	Margaret Messer	57
Philip Turnor, Inland Surveyor		
RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES.....		64
Some Memories of a J.P.—C. Evans Sargent		
Recollections of the S.G.G.A. Convention of 1910—George F. Edwards		
HISTORIC SITES.....	Bruce Peel	68
Cumberland House		
BOOK REVIEWS.....		74
NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.....		79

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## The Saskatchewan Relief Commission, 1931-34<sup>1</sup>

SASKATCHEWAN has traditionally been a land of optimism. During the first three decades of the present century, the province had progressed from an era of immigration and development to a prosperous war period and then to an optimistic time of post-war expansion. The intervening transition periods were brief and soon forgotten. The farmers, to be sure, had experienced a variety of natural hazards, such as drought, grasshoppers and rust, but these problems were usually local and infrequent. It was almost taken for granted that "next year" would compensate for such losses. This complacency was rudely shaken in the 1930's by an unprecedented succession of calamities. The grim repetition of crop losses gradually weakened the normal optimism. A combination of circumstances finally proved that the seven lean years were possible even in Saskatchewan.

Several factors were responsible for this catastrophe. First and foremost was the drought. The average rainfall from 1929 to 1937 was far below normal, and hot, dry winds aggravated the situation. Special complications, such as grasshoppers in 1933 and rust in 1935, took their toll. To make matters worse, there was little demand for farm produce in world markets, and prices dropped rapidly.<sup>2</sup> Thus the unfortunate combination of reduced production and lower prices meant that farm income in Saskatchewan threatened to disappear entirely.<sup>3</sup> The effect was even more disastrous because it was unexpected.

So serious was the plight of many farmers that their initial problem was one of survival. Even such necessities as food, clothing and fuel were beyond their income. Furthermore the continuing depression soon made local credit arrangements impossible. Aid had to come from the government for these essentials. But the farmers also had to make financial arrangements for seeding and harvesting before they could become re-established. Here again the government proved to be the only available source of credit. Government assistance, or relief, soon became a huge and apparently permanent undertaking.

Previously, relief had normally been considered a local problem and the rural municipalities were held responsible for the care of indigents. Thus in 1929 the municipalities had accepted the burden of relief. When conditions showed no improvement in the subsequent years, however, they could not stand the financial strain. Since the municipalities were unable to collect many taxes, and since their borrowing power was very limited by the adverse conditions, the only alternative

<sup>1</sup> The main sources used in preparing this article are the Saskatchewan Relief Commission (hereafter cited as the S.R.C.) records and correspondence in the Saskatchewan Archives and the minutes of the Commission, in the Relief Revenue Branch of the Treasury Department (microfilm copy in the Saskatchewan Archives). For some specific details the writer is indebted to interviews with the following: Mr. Henry Black, former chairman of the Commission; Mr. M. A. MacPherson, K.C., former Provincial-Treasurer and Attorney-General; Mr. G. M. MacLeod of the Department of Co-operation and Co-operative Development; and Mr. T. Lax, former Deputy Provincial-Treasurer.

<sup>2</sup> In 1932, wheat dropped to the lowest price in 300 years: W. A. Mackintosh, *Economic Problems of the Prairie Provinces* (Toronto, 1935), p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> According to E. W. Stapleford: *Report on Rural Relief* (Ottawa, 1939), p. 26. The total Saskatchewan wheat income for the years 1922-29 was \$1,559 millions and for the years 1930-37 was \$449 millions!

was to turn to the provincial government for help. The latter was also experiencing some difficulty since such important sources of revenue as gasoline and liquor taxes were affected by prevailing economic conditions. Nevertheless the province did for a time try to assist the municipalities with their relief problem without turning to the Dominion government for aid.

The crop conditions of 1931, however, made it obvious that a very widespread relief program would be necessary. Almost all of Saskatchewan south of Saskatoon was in the crop failure area!<sup>4</sup> In such an emergency financial assistance from the Federal government was required. But this presented a new problem. Since this relief covered such a wide area, and was to be financed from various sources, how was its distribution to be supervised? A proclamation of the Lieutenant-Governor on August 25, 1931, answered the question. A Saskatchewan Relief Commission was appointed for the "purpose of relieving distress and providing employment,"<sup>5</sup> to which all relief agencies of the provincial government were to be transferred.<sup>6</sup> Apparently it was felt that this non-political supervising body would ensure an equitable distribution of relief, and that by centralizing its administration, duplication of work would be eliminated. Thus the Commission was expected to be both just and efficient. The actual results of this system should be revealed by our study.

The Saskatchewan Relief Commission consisted of five members, with Mr. Henry Black as chairman.<sup>7</sup> These members, who received no remuneration, were to be responsible for formulating the policies of the Commission. Mr. C. B. Daniel, who was appointed General Manager, was the responsible administrative officer. The Commission was concerned only with rural relief, which, of course, was expected to be a temporary problem. However, after each harvest it was found necessary to continue relief in certain areas, and consequently the Commission dealt with this "emergency" for three years in various parts of the province.

In its first year, 1931-1932, the Relief Commission administered relief to a very extensive area. The worst region, known as the "A" area, with three years of consecutive crop failures, was composed of 95 municipalities roughly grouped in a triangle, with the apex near Watrous and the base stretching from Torquay to Frontier. East and West of this triangle were 77 "B" area municipalities with two years of consecutive crop failures. Then came 68 municipalities comprising the "C" area with one year of crop failure. The next year relief was mainly restricted to a large part of the "A" area. In the final year, however, relief again had to be administered over a large area. There were 75 municipalities included in the "A" area, then in their fifth consecutive year of crop failure. The "B" area included 128 other municipalities. However, the various classifications of these areas do not indicate different administrative policies but only a different method

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Map, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Saskatchewan Gazette* September 5, 1931.

<sup>6</sup> Editorial, *Regina Leader-Post*, August 14, 1931, when the Commission was first announced.

<sup>7</sup> Members were: Mr. Henry Black, Chairman; Mrs. Pearl Johnston, Mr. A. E. Whitmore, Mr. W. G. Yule, and Mr. W. A. Munns. A cabinet minister, usually the Provincial-Treasurer or Minister of Agriculture, attended most of the meetings. Interviews with Mr. Black and Mr. MacPherson indicate that these members were selected to represent various political attitudes in the province.

of financing the relief. The system of administering relief was quite uniform throughout the whole relief area.

For the first year the Commission hired relief officers in each municipality under its jurisdiction, to act as its local administrative officials. These men were assisted by voluntary local relief committees appointed by the Commission. By thus eliminating the use of municipal councils for relief administration it was hoped to avoid any influence of municipal politics or local prejudices.<sup>8</sup> The duties of the relief officer were "to receive, investigate and report on applications for relief by rural municipality residents."<sup>9</sup> The relief committees were appointed for the purpose of "assisting in the proper carrying out of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission programme in the municipalities, and advising the Commission with respect to the same." The next year, however, with the system functioning smoothly and with a reduced program of relief it was decided to use the municipal councils for field administration, thus eliminating both the relief officers and the relief committees. This new system proved satisfactory and so it was continued for the 1933-1934 season.<sup>10</sup> In each of the three years, these local administrative units were assisted by supervisors appointed by the Commission who were to co-operate with them "in an effort to conduct an efficient and economical administration."<sup>11</sup> The supervisors, in turn, were dependent upon the field service department of the Commission for instructions and supervision. In this way, the policies of the Commission were quite uniformly administered throughout the province.

This uniformity naturally depended upon the completion of a variety of applications, schedules and requisitions. The basic form, however, was the "Application for Relief," which a farmer had to complete before becoming entitled to any type of relief. The usual routine information was required—marital status; number of children; description of land and buildings. In addition there was a "Statement of Affairs" showing the assets and liabilities of the applicant. The relief officer appended some general remarks and stated his opinion as to the necessity for relief. The relief committee then did the same. If both approved the application it was then passed by an approval board of the Commission. Later the form was somewhat simplified and required the approval of the municipal council and the supervisor. The final approval of an Application for Relief did not necessarily mean that the applicant was entitled to all forms of relief. The approval was qualified, and indicated which type of relief was to be granted. This meant that any combination of food, clothing, fuel, fodder or seed might be granted to an applicant. The basis of approval, however, was a simple one in all cases: necessity was to be the only criterion.

The Application for Relief also included an undertaking to repay all the relief received from the Commission. It was hoped that this would remove any stigma of charity, and so encourage people to accept relief rather than suffer in

<sup>8</sup> Mr. C. B. Daniel: "Summary of the Activities of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission" p. 2 (hereafter cited as Summary); microfilm copy in the Saskatchewan Archives.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of S.R.C. August 20, 1931.

<sup>10</sup> Minutes of S.R.C. August 29, 1933.

<sup>11</sup> S.R.C. General Policy file—circulars.

silence. On the other hand it was hoped that the necessity of repayment would prevent any unnecessary applications. Nevertheless this relief could not be considered a form of short term credit. Relief officers were specifically warned not to let this promise to pay "influence you in your efforts to see that only applications for necessities receive your approval."<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, applicants who were not expected to repay their relief advances were not to be refused on that account. The promise of repayment was never allowed to influence the approval of an application.

However, even after the Application for Relief was finally approved, relief might be stopped abruptly in certain cases. Information that an applicant had undisclosed sources of revenue, such as a pension or a secret hoard of grain, or that the applicant had refused to accept a suitable job, resulted in an investigation. If a relief recipient was operating a car, relief orders were withheld until the Commission was convinced that the car was necessary. As the General Manager explained—"If an applicant is able to pay for a license and the consequent operation of the car, for purposes other than strictly business, he should be able to at least care for his food requirements." The Commission was even more positively opposed to the consumption of liquor. Any applicant who was known to have purchased liquor, even a few glasses of beer, was struck off relief immediately.<sup>13</sup> Even though the Commission's information about such irregularities was very incomplete, such a clearly formulated policy probably prevented many flagrant violations of its principle of aid for the needy only.

While the elaborate method of approving applications did ensure a uniform and just administration, it also had the typical fault of a bureaucratic system. A long delay between the application and the authorization for relief was inevitable. In some cases this might have been disastrous. For instance, an early spell of cold weather might make the immediate distribution of coal necessary. To prevent any suffering from delay in such cases, the local relief officials were allowed to use their own initiative, subject to certain restrictions. They were permitted to issue "Emergency Relief Orders" for ten dollars' worth of food or for one ton of coal without any specific authorization from the Commission. This irregular method was to be used in emergencies only, however, and Applications for Relief from the recipients were to be forwarded to the Commission immediately.

Once the Applications for Relief were safely on file, relief could be distributed in an organized manner. Of primary importance was the distribution of such essentials as food, clothing and fuel. Handled in separate departments for the first two years, this relief was finally consolidated in the direct relief department of the Commission. The work of this department was quite seasonal, since clothing and fuel were mainly winter requirements, and summer gardens were expected to reduce food orders. During the winter, however, the proper organization of this distribution was important enough to merit detailed consideration.

The method of handling direct relief illustrates a basic policy of the Relief Commission, that of avoiding any disruption of the normal business routine in

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> S.R.C. General Manager's Correspondence: Stop Orders file.

the province. All forms of relief merchandise were through the usual channels instead of directly by the Commission. All food and clothing orders bore a merchant's name and only he was allowed to fill the orders. In this way the retail merchants were able to continue in business through the depression. This system required a great deal of organization and patience. The applicant named his merchant on the Application for Relief, but the Commission was continually being requested to change the name on orders they had issued. These changes wasted a good deal of time and were often unnecessary. Many requests were simply the result of other merchants' solicitations. To prevent this the Commission finally refused to change the merchant's name without the written consent of its local representative. Many merchants, however, felt that they had a legitimate complaint. Some of their former customers, to whom they had made substantial advances, had decided to change merchants. The Commission agreed that the creditor merchant should retain the patronage of their debtors, and refused to authorize such changes. As a result of these efforts, most of the local merchants retained their regular customers. The success of the policy of the Commission in using normal business channels is vouched for by the fact that the retail merchants were able to stay in business through the depression.

The merchants, however, did not obtain this assistance completely free of obligations. Before they could even qualify for the privilege of filling relief orders, they had to prove that they had not gone into business just to take advantage of such an authorization. Furthermore, general merchants were only authorized to handle relief orders for food and clothing if their stock warranted it. Even after receiving such an authorization the merchants found that the Commission's restrictions were comprehensive. For instance, the Commission set the prices for all articles supplied on relief orders. These prices were based on wholesale prices arranged for a certain *quality* of goods, and allowed the retail merchant 15 to 20% profit. Most of the merchants had to accept a loss on their original stock by selling at these lower prices in order to dispose of it. Generally the merchants were very co-operative. There are incidents on file, however, where a merchant charged higher prices, or where a merchant substituted cash or luxury goods instead of staple merchandise for relief orders.<sup>14</sup> Such infractions of the regulations meant that the merchant's authorizations were withdrawn—a severe punishment in the drought area.

Nevertheless, even the use of the retail merchants' facilities did not completely solve the distribution problem. For example, what food and how much food should a relief applicant receive? The original relief order form listed the goods which were to be supplied, and the prices of these goods. These forms were mailed to the recipient, honoured by the merchant and then cashed at the local bank.<sup>15</sup> This entailed detailed preparation by the Commission, and the handling of many small items at the bank. The form finally adopted was a food delivery order. These orders merely indicated the total value of the food to be supplied. The merchants, having been sent a list of authorized foods and maximum prices,

<sup>14</sup> S.R.C. Food Department—Merchant file.

<sup>15</sup> S.R.C. Food Department—Policy file.

could then fill the order as the relief recipient desired. The merchant usually forwarded these orders to his wholesaler in payment. Then on certain settlement dates the Commission issued a cheque for the total amount received from the wholesaler. This system not only reduced the work of the Commission but also provided more flexibility for the recipient. The food relief system of one of the urban centres in Saskatchewan offers an interesting comparison.<sup>16</sup> This centre set up a relief store from which all relief recipients were supplied with a specific weekly ration. The long list of complaints and petitions indicate the weaknesses of the system: the local merchants objected because they lost their customers; those on relief complained about the inconvenience of having to deal at this store, and claimed that they could get their food cheaper elsewhere; worst of all, there was a good deal of waste because the weekly ration, scientific though it may have been, was not suitable for every recipient—many, for instance, would have traded their tea ration for oatmeal, but this was not permitted. The system of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission at least managed to eliminate most of these problems, and satisfy both the applicant and the merchant.

The method of distributing flour indicates another important policy of the Commission. Flour was not included in the food orders but was supplied on separate flour orders. The large mills in Saskatchewan supplied most of the flour handled by the Commission. Local dealers, authorized by the Commission, then distributed this flour for a small commission. This system, however, threatened to eliminate the smaller mills, and so special arrangements had to be made. When one of the local mills had submitted a satisfactory sample of their flour to the Commission, and reached a price agreement, flour orders on this mill were issued to all applicants within a radius of fifteen miles.<sup>17</sup> Thus, relief applicants were assured of satisfactory flour at a reasonable price. But in addition, this meant that the products of local mills were assured a market. This policy, early enunciated,<sup>18</sup> of giving preference to Saskatchewan and Canadian made goods was adhered to throughout the life of the Commission.

The long Saskatchewan winters made clothing another important relief item. Previous to the organization of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission, the Red Cross had distributed clothing with financial assistance from the provincial government. In the fall of 1931, the Commission became responsible for supplying the "A" and "B" areas,<sup>19</sup> while the Red Cross continued to supply the rest of the province. In February, 1932, however, the Red Cross turned over its accounts and its store of clothing to the Commission. The Red Cross was paid for the clothing it had distributed and the recipients were charged for the amount they had received. The Commission then assumed responsibility for the distribution of clothing throughout the relief area.<sup>20</sup> The Commission supplied only the most

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<sup>16</sup> S.R.C. Special Cases—City file.

<sup>17</sup> *Regina Leader-Post*, March 21, 1934.

<sup>18</sup> *Canadian Annual Review*, 1932 p. 260.

<sup>19</sup> See p. 42

<sup>20</sup> S.R.C.—Clothing Department—Policy file.

necessary articles of clothing and even these in limited quantities.<sup>21</sup> After mid-winter, clothing requisitions had to be investigated by the local relief officer before being authorized by the Commission. Clothing was seldom provided during the summer months. Unfortunately, as the depression continued, individual requirements increased because the reserves of old clothing gradually disappeared. Bedding offers a good example of this. The Commission had never supplied bedding material but it was not until the winter of 1933-34 that the shortage of bedding became serious. This special problem was dealt with in the most seriously stricken areas by co-operation with voluntary local groups. The Commission provided the piece goods and materials for quilts and bedding, and the local groups made and distributed the articles. The recipients were then charged with the cost of the materials.<sup>22</sup> In this way it was hoped to minimize expenses and also to foster local initiative.

The other winter problem was supplying fuel. Like food, coal was first issued by means of relief orders and later by delivery orders, although no dealer's name was included in the form.<sup>23</sup> Any authorized dealer could fill an order, receiving a small handling charge per ton. Preference of course was given to Saskatchewan coal,<sup>24</sup> except in Western Saskatchewan where freight rates made Alberta coal more economical. In spite of complaints about the lignite coal this policy was never seriously modified. When distances were short, applicants were urged to haul coal from the minehead of small mines in the south-east. If the applicant could obtain coal on his own property, the Commission was quite willing to aid him to the extent of paying the royalty of 25c per ton. However, coal was never distributed in areas where a natural supply of wood was available. Thus the fuel policy is an excellent illustration of the economy exercised by the Relief Commission. It ensured an adequate supply of fuel for its relief recipients, but it arbitrarily decided the source and type of fuel to be used in order to reduce expenses.

This distribution of direct relief was supplemented by charitable people throughout Canada. Church organizations, fraternities, welfare groups, distant friends and generous individuals rallied to help the impoverished areas. During the three years of the Relief Commission, 577 carloads of fruit, vegetables and clothing were donated and distributed.<sup>25</sup> Even large quantities of flower seeds and bulbs were contributed, and proved to be a very acceptable gift. The two railway companies greatly assisted by waiving all freight charges on these donations. So important were these various donations, it was found necessary to organize the Saskatchewan Voluntary Relief Committee, with local committees throughout the relief area. These small groups were responsible for an equitable distribution of the various donations. The central committee co-operated with the

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

e.g. Schedule for clothing and footwear 1933-34:

Adult	Boy	Girl	Infant
\$9.00	\$6.25	\$5.25	\$2.50

Maximum for largest family—\$75.00

<sup>22</sup> S.R.C. General Policy file.

<sup>23</sup> S.R.C. Fuel Department—Policy file.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Normally the ration was 3 tons of Saskatchewan coal to 1 ton of Alberta coal.

<sup>25</sup> E. W. Stapleford; *op. cit.*, p. 52.

Commission to supervise the delivery and eliminate duplication.<sup>26</sup> Thus, by means of direct relief and donations, extreme suffering was averted. It is probably safe to say that at least a standard of living sufficient to maintain health and working efficiency prevailed in the areas under the administration of the Commission.<sup>27</sup>

In spite of the importance of the direct relief distributed, it is interesting to note that this only amounted to 36.4% of the total expenditures of the Commission, the balance being devoted to re-establishing the farmers.<sup>28</sup> For instance, it was necessary to ensure the survival of livestock and poultry. The extended drought had done more than prevent the growing of cash crops; it had also prevented the harvesting of coarse grains and hay, and had ruined much of the pasturage.<sup>29</sup> Consequently feed and fodder were very scarce commodities. This, incidentally, involved the danger of starving livestock and also the problem of fodder prices increasing until they were out of line with the low value of livestock. Such problems became the responsibility of the Commission's feed and fodder department.

Local transfers of feed and fodder were naturally the most suitable solution. Wherever possible an approved applicant obtained his requirements from a neighbour. The latter then was paid by a cheque from the Commission, or, if he had received relief, his relief indebtedness was reduced by that amount. It was only in 1932-33, however, that conditions were favorable for the general use of local transfers, for in that season widespread rains had meant that most municipalities could supply their own needs. In the other two years' drought and grasshoppers made more expensive measures necessary.

In the case of fodder there were two possible solutions, viz., to ship the fodder to the livestock, or the livestock to the fodder. Both methods were used. For the first year the Department of Agriculture arranged for the purchase and loading of large quantities of fodder for the Commission, and the Commission then organized its shipment and distribution. By 1932-33, the feed and fodder department had taken over the entire responsibility.<sup>30</sup> By means of large-scale purchases and freight concessions, huge quantities of fodder<sup>31</sup> were distributed at reasonable prices. In many cases, however, where no local fodder or pasturage whatever were available, it was found advisable to ship the livestock north to winter feeding areas. In 1934 the situation was so acute, due to grasshoppers, that some carloads were even sent north for summer pasturage.<sup>32</sup> Incidentally,

<sup>26</sup> S.R.C. General Manager's Correspondence—Donations file.

<sup>27</sup> This is partially substantiated by the following mortality rates from the *Canada Year Book* 1933-34, p. 161:

5-year averages of mortality rates per 1000 in Saskatchewan:			
1921-25	1926-30	1931-35	1936-40
7.5	7.3	6.5	7.0

<sup>28</sup> Based on figures from the *Saskatchewan Brief to the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations* (Regina, 1937), p. 184:

Direct Relief—\$12,924,769

Total Relief—\$35,536,829

<sup>29</sup> Minutes of S.R.C.—General Manager's Report—January 26, 1932.

<sup>30</sup> S.R.C.—General Manager's Correspondence—Department of Agriculture file.

<sup>31</sup> Summary, p. 12, states that the total fodder distribution amounted to 216,090 tons.

<sup>32</sup> A total of 1831 carloads were shipped north. Saskatchewan Archives: Livestock Branch correspondence re winter feeding.

haying outfits were also assisted to go north to procure a supply of fodder. By these various methods, the necessary minimum of fodder was obtained.

This fodder, however, had to be supplemented by feed grain. Even in winter some feed grain was desirable, and for the spring work it was essential. Like fodder, however, feed grain was scarce and likely to be expensive. Procuring this feed became the responsibility of the grain purchasing department. The estimated requirements were protected by purchasing futures on the Winnipeg market, thus preventing any exorbitant prices being charged.<sup>33</sup> The department also had the foresight to freeze the estimated requirements of feed grain in the local elevators every fall, and so prevent its shipment to the lakehead. There is little doubt that this prevented the payment of freight both ways in many cases. Large quantities of feed were purchased—eleven million bushels of feed oats and barley in the first year alone!<sup>33</sup> Even so, this amount proved inadequate and it became necessary to distribute some wheat as feed in spite of the risk involved. Constructive policies were also inaugurated to ease the situation. Some seed rye was distributed in the fall to produce a fodder crop, and in 1934 seed corn was distributed because of the grasshopper threat. These steps were taken on the advice of the Department of Agriculture and indicate the close co-operation with this department.<sup>33</sup> In spite of all these efforts, however, feed, and fodder remained a serious problem. Due to limited supplies the estimated requirements submitted by municipal councils were never completely filled. On the other hand, the rumors of vast numbers of livestock starving to death are certainly greatly exaggerated. Although many animals had to be sold, the Commission did make it possible for most farmers to keep the necessary minimum of livestock on the farm.

Another vital problem of agricultural rehabilitation concerned seed grain. Few farmers in the drought area could purchase seed, and yet only by growing grain could they become re-established. Thus, supplying seed grain became another responsibility of the Commission, and of the grain purchasing department in particular. The size of this undertaking can be judged from the fact that over 14 million bushels of seed grain were distributed in the three year period.<sup>34</sup> As was the case with feed, all local stocks of seed grain were frozen by the Commission, and when even this failed to produce enough seed oats, a premium of two or three cents a bushel was offered. Whenever necessary, the Commission arranged to have grain cleaned to make it suitable for seed. However, the Commission never forgot that its function was to relieve distress only. For example, in cases where farmers had sold all their grain in the fall without making any arrangements for seed, the Commission declared that it would provide no assistance. Furthermore, in 1934 a maximum of only 300 bushels of wheat and 100 bushels of oats per applicant was allowed for seed, because it was felt that this would be sufficient to provide a living under normal conditions.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, the seed policy of the Commission exhibited some flexibility. In cases where seeded land had suffered from wind erosion, grain for re-seeding was provided if weather

<sup>33</sup> S.R.C.—Grain Purchasing Department—Policy file.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, Report of Department 1933-34.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, circulars.

conditions were at all favorable. But it was quite obvious that even supplying all the seed for the destitute farmers was not enough. The seed still had to be planted.

Seeding operations presented a variety of problems. The use of old machinery presented one complication. New equipment was out of the question and even machinery or harness repairs were beyond the means of many. As an emergency measure, the Commission financed some black-smithing and machinery repairs. The applicant first had to state that he would otherwise be unable to complete seeding, and even then the recipient seldom received assistance in excess of \$10.00.<sup>36</sup> A more universal problem, of course, was the need for feed and fodder for seeding operations. This was supplied by the Commission as before. Tractor-farmers, however, needed large quantities of fuel and lubricants. These petroleum products were also supplied but, like repairs, only as an emergency measure.<sup>37</sup>

These seed and seeding operations of the Commission were financed by a separate arrangement. The funds were provided by the provincial government by means of loans from the Dominion government. The applicants were expected to repay the advances from their crop, and seed grain liens were taken as a guarantee, covering crops grown that year and in the succeeding year.<sup>38</sup> Collecting from the farmers in the fall became the responsibility of the local elevator agents. The latter were issued printed collection books showing the indebtedness of each farmer. The farmer was allowed a maximum of \$100.00 to meet threshing expenses, but after that the agent was expected to remit enough storage tickets to the Commission to cover the lien.<sup>39</sup> The Commission, however, seems to have been a lenient creditor. For the first year it even credited the farmers with a set price well above the market price, for grain turned over to it.<sup>40</sup> The rural municipalities were also allowed to collect a year's taxes first, although the lien had priority.<sup>39</sup> Finally, if the farmers were not in a financial condition to cover the lien, an extension was readily granted. The leniency, made necessary by the very unfavorable crop conditions, meant that many liens were still in effect until their cancellation in 1937.<sup>41</sup> After seeding, the farmers were faced with the problem of summerfallowing. The Commission, however, offered no assistance, since it considered that relief was an emergency measure and not concerned with next year's crop.<sup>42</sup> Harvesting also presented financial difficulties to many farmers. Binder twine and binder repairs presented a serious problem in that "pre-combine" era. In 1932 the Relief Commission, with considerable reluctance, decided it was necessary to distribute twine and repairs in cases where no other method of financing was possible.<sup>43</sup> A total of almost \$800,000 was advanced for this purpose.<sup>44</sup> The loans were expected to be short term

<sup>36</sup> S.R.C.—Fuel Department—Twine and Repairs file.

<sup>37</sup> S.R.C.—Fuel Department—Policy file.

<sup>38</sup> *Statutes of Saskatchewan*, 1932, Cap. 74, Sec. 8.

<sup>39</sup> S.R.C.—Field Men Correspondence—Collection Inspectors file.

<sup>40</sup> S.R.C.—Grain Purchasing Department—Policy file.

<sup>41</sup> *Statutes of Saskatchewan*, 1937, Cap. 92, Sec. 28.

<sup>42</sup> S.R.C.—General Policy file.

<sup>43</sup> S.R.C.—Fuel Department—Twine and Repairs file.

<sup>44</sup> S.R.C.—Fuel Department—Policy file.

loans, and wholesale firms supplied the twine and repairs on credit. Payment was slow, however, and two years later 10% of the advances was still outstanding.<sup>45</sup> The Commission never financed harvesting operations again. It was felt that the necessary short term loans could be procured from a bank or by an arrangement between the municipalities and the cordage companies. The Commission decided that its obligation ended with the sowing of the crop.

We have now considered the administration of both direct relief and of agricultural aid. One might expect that this would cover all the activities of the Relief Commission. But, as the Commissioners discovered, there was still a variety of special problems to cope with. Further assistance was necessary to relieve distress in Saskatchewan.

Medical aid for the rural indigents is one example of these problems. Very little medical aid was given directly to individuals. Extra fruit might be issued on food orders, for those requiring a special diet, but such cases were usually referred to the Red Cross or the Governor-General's Emergency Distress Fund.<sup>46</sup> But it soon became obvious that even normal medical services could not be maintained without some financial assistance. In many areas, doctors, dentists and hospitals were not receiving sufficient money to cover routine expenses. A system of government grants was arranged so that these essential services could be continued. Doctors and dentists in the relief area submitted monthly returns to the Commission showing their work and their income. The Department of Public Health then advised the Commission whether they merited the grant. For the first winter the maximum individual monthly payments to doctors and dentists were \$75.00 and \$25.00 respectively. These amounts were later reduced, but some grant was made every winter.<sup>47</sup> Hospitals were also given a grant to enable them to maintain services, usually amounting to 25c a day for each relief patient.<sup>48</sup> These various grants were not given as a subsidy, but rather as a contribution to help meet necessary expenses. The total amount of these grants did not constitute a very imposing figure,<sup>49</sup> but in many cases, medical services would have been impossible without them.

Another serious problem was rural education. The Saskatchewan winters were responsible for a good deal of this trouble. Many of the clothing requests on file indicate that the children were not properly clothed to walk to school during the winter.<sup>50</sup> Any such cases reported were investigated, and clothing was issued if necessary. Fuel for the schools presented another problem. Many school districts could not afford to buy fuel, and might have had to close down their schools without some assistance. Some carloads of coal were donated by Estevan mines; the rest had to be purchased by the Commission<sup>51</sup>. Still more serious was the plight of many teachers. In many areas taxes were uncollectable and the only school income was the government grant. Frequently the teachers

<sup>45</sup> Summary, p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> S.R.C.—General Manager Correspondence—Charitable organization file.

<sup>47</sup> S.R.C.—Special cases—Doctors and dentists files.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, Hospital file.

<sup>49</sup> \$235,788 according to E. W. Stapleford; *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>50</sup> S.R.C.—General Manager's Correspondence—Complaints file.

<sup>51</sup> Expenditures by Commission: \$87,223.26 (Summary, p. 14).

did not receive enough to pay their board. In such cases the Commission provided direct relief for the teachers, to be repaid when their salary arrears were met.<sup>52</sup> In this way it was at least possible for them to continue teaching.

There were also special agricultural problems to be considered. For instance, gopher poison, formerly a municipal problem, could no longer be financed by many municipalities. In 1932 the Commission advanced some municipalities a certain proportion of the cost of the gopher poison, to be repaid in the fall. Collections were very poor, and the Commission discontinued this form of assistance. The grasshopper menace, however, could not be ignored. By 1934 grasshopper infestation had become very widespread. Although the grasshopper campaign was organized and supervised by the Department of Agriculture, the Commission gave its close co-operation. Seed was provided only for summer-fallow, which was more likely to be free of grasshopper eggs. The Commission also provided the feed and fuel necessary for guardstripping and plowing. This again indicates the close co-operation between the government departments and the Relief Commission.

Another complicating factor in relief administration was the northward migration from the dried-out areas. Hundreds of despondent families decided to make a new start in Northern Saskatchewan. These people were allowed to ship two carloads of goods out of the drought area at no charge, the administrative arrangements being the responsibility of the traffic department of the Relief Commission.<sup>53</sup> Naturally, these people had no immediate source of income after their arrival. Some time would elapse before buildings could be erected and land cleared, and in the meantime relief was required. This meant an extension of the relief area northwards. The supervisors who were appointed to these northern areas found that issuing emergency food relief orders to the scattered settlers was the most satisfactory system.<sup>54</sup> Since the few stores in the area seldom carried a stock of clothing, clothing requisitions were filled by mail order houses. Arrangements were made to obtain repayment of these relief advances by means of relief work. The Department of Highways organized the building of pioneer roads in the north, using relief recipients as laborers, two-thirds of the wages being in the form of a credit against their tax arrears or relief. In 1933 a special survey was made of these northern settlers by the supervisors, and whenever possible they were encouraged to deliver wood to the nearest railway in payment for relief. This wood was then distributed as relief fuel in needy areas. In this way, the cost of re-establishing these settlers was considerably reduced.

An entirely different problem was presented by the group classified as "single, homeless and unemployed." This type of relief was financed by the Dominion government, but the Relief Commission became responsible for its administration in November, 1932. Relief for this group, which comprised only

<sup>52</sup> S.R.C.—Special cases—Teachers' file.

<sup>53</sup> Freight charges were divided among the provincial and the Dominion governments and the railway. Order-in-Council, PC 989.

<sup>54</sup> In areas as far north as Cumberland House, the R.C.M.P. were authorized to issue emergency orders to needy families. See S.R.C.—Relief Applications—R.C.M.P. file.

the physically fit, was provided by two methods. As many men as possible were provided with winter employment on farms where the farmer needed help but could not pay wages. The government paid the laborer \$5.00 a month, and the farmer provided the room and board. Women were permitted to work as domestics under the same arrangement. The men for whom no farm work was available were sent to relief camps and later were employed on construction projects under the Department of Militia and Defence. Unsatisfactory as such camps were, they at least provided an alternative to the life of a transient.

Transient families, however, presented a problem quite different to that of the "single, homeless and unemployed." Many of these families left non-productive farms and drifted to urban centres. Shacks of scrap lumber and cardboard mushroomed up in such areas as North Regina and Sherwood Annex. Since these people could seldom establish the necessary self-sustaining residence for six months and so become bona fide residents of the municipality, the provincial government had to assume full responsibility for their relief. Since these people, unlike rural applicants, could not supply their own meat, milk or eggs, an entirely different schedule of relief was necessary which was eventually adjusted to conform to the local urban relief schedule, including such items as light, water and rental allowances.<sup>55</sup> A few families took advantage of a \$300 loan scheme to become established on a northern farm,<sup>56</sup> but most of them decided to remain on relief until urban employment was available.

The foregoing details give some indication of the comprehensive nature of the rural relief administered by the Commission. Direct relief, agricultural aid and special problems—all of these presented unique difficulties and required different treatment. However, there was one problem common to every phase of relief administration—the problem of financing the relief.

As we have seen, the cost of relief was somewhat reduced by the emphasis of the Commission upon strict economy. Applications for relief were carefully checked before being approved, and repayment of relief was a basic principle. Another important economy was achieved by obtaining price reductions for most relief articles. The arguments presented to the wholesalers for price concessions are mentioned by the General Manager in one of his reports.<sup>57</sup> Those based on the charitable nature of the distribution and the precedent of other wholesalers were probably not very effective. Although the Commission did not actually purchase the goods, the inclusion of such goods on relief orders meant increased sales and so merited some price concession. When a wholesale price was agreed upon, a retail price was established which allowed the retailer a small margin of profit. The effectiveness of this method can be shown by an example. Letters on file from various hardware merchants show that in 1931 the price of formalin varied from 23 to 25 cents. In 1932, by obtaining price concessions from wholesalers, the Commission arranged the distribution of formalin at a retail price of

<sup>55</sup> Minutes of S.R.C.: General Manager's Report October 5, 1933.

<sup>56</sup> *Unemployment Relief Report for the Fiscal Year 1932-33*, being supplement to the 5th Annual Report of the Department of Railways, Labour and Industries of the Province of Saskatchewan (Regina, 1933).

<sup>57</sup> Minutes of S.R.C. General Manager's Report March 31, 1932.

19 cents!<sup>58</sup> This policy, applied to other commodities, effected a substantial reduction in the cost of rural relief.<sup>59</sup>

The contribution to economy resulting from freight reductions granted by the two railway companies also deserves special mention. All donations shipped by carload lots to the drought area, even from as far away as the Maritimes, were moved without charge. The freight on relief feed and fodder and on the carloads of settlers' effects was reduced by one-third. Special shipments, such as grasshopper poison, and livestock for winter feeding, were transported for half of the normal freight charge. Even demurrage rates were reduced for the distribution of relief seed and feed.<sup>60</sup> These concessions reduced relief costs considerably<sup>61</sup> and certainly were a factor in ensuring the delivery of many of the donations.

In spite of these many economies, the total cost of the relief administered by the Commission was, nevertheless, over \$35 million.<sup>62</sup> Providing this large sum of money was probably one of the most difficult problems that had to be faced. The municipalities in the drought area could not collect taxes and could not obtain further credit from the banks. The revenues of the provincial government were so reduced that it, too, was unable to finance an extended relief program. This meant that the Dominion government had to provide most of the money. The municipal and provincial governments had to assume some financial obligations, it is true, but provincial funds were usually derived from short-term Treasury Bills.

Although the cost of the relief was thus definitely allocated, this did not mean that the money was always available. Dominion funds were only forwarded upon the receipt of itemized accounts from the Commission. Provincial funds were often delayed until a loan from the federal government was arranged. This frequently meant that cheques covering accounts payable by the Commission could not be issued by the Treasury Department until funds were available,<sup>63</sup> resulting in delays which caused many of the complaints received by the Commission. There are cases on record where individuals and companies supplied the Commission with some commodity, financing the undertaking through a bank, only to find that they had to pay interest on the loan for two or three months while awaiting payment.<sup>64</sup> Although the Commission was not to blame for this state of affairs, it was held responsible for it by the general public.

<sup>58</sup> S.R.C.—Fuel Department—Formalin file.

<sup>59</sup> S.R.C.—General Policy file. The Report of the Provincial Auditor on the October 27, 1932 estimates a savings of \$1,000,000 that year as a result of such concessions.

<sup>60</sup> S.R.C.—Traffic Department—Policy file.

<sup>61</sup> The General Manager estimates this saving at \$500,000. Summary, p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> *Saskatchewan Brief to the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations*, (Regina, 1937), p. 184.

<sup>63</sup> Summary, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Orders-in-Council PC 990, 991.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, PC 992.

<sup>66</sup> Minutes of S.R.C.: General Manager's Report, January 25, 1934.

<sup>67</sup> From figures given by E. W. Stapleford, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 41.

<sup>68</sup> Minutes of S.R.C.—General Manager's Report, December 3, 1931.

<sup>69</sup> S.R.C.—General Manager's Correspondence—Complaints file.

In spite of these financial difficulties, and the unexpected duration of the "emergency," it is interesting to note that the policies enunciated by the Relief Commission at its commencement underwent very little modification. The Commission did revert to using the municipal councils as its local representatives in 1932, but this may be explained by the fact that the municipalities assumed some of the financial responsibility at the same time. However, the principle of repayment of the relief, the preferences for Saskatchewan and Canadian products, the use of local merchants and the price-fixing system for relief goods, survived unchanged for the entire three year period. This is certainly a tribute to the foresight of the Commission, but it does present another problem. Why, after three years of operating in an apparently satisfactory manner, was the commission principle of administering relief abandoned?

The termination of the Relief Commission coincided with the election of a new provincial government in 1934. The responsibility for rural relief was once again divided among various departments of the government. Direct relief was assigned to the Bureau of Labour and Public Welfare, in the Department of Municipal Affairs, and agricultural aid to the Department of Agriculture. This was partly as an economy measure. In a statement of opposition policy in June the "too great overhead costs" of the relief administration had been criticized. The new government hoped that the staffs in the (government) departments "would be sufficient to carry on the business."<sup>71</sup> However, many of the former Relief Commission employees had to be hired by the departments in order to cope with the additional work.<sup>72</sup> Thus the overhead costs were probably not greatly reduced. Another reason given for the change in relief administration was to avoid delay. The statement of policy previously referred to, spoke of unwarrantable delays "aggravating the difficulty of those in need." This, however, was a little unfair. As we have seen, emergency relief orders could be issued locally to prevent suffering, and many of the delays were the result of scarcity of material or of financial difficulties. Thus, the two main arguments against the Commission, unnecessary expense and delay, were not really conclusive.

What then were the basic differences in the two types of relief administration? The Relief Commission did act as a "buffer" to relieve the government of direct political pressure on its relief administration, but on the other hand, this meant that there was no direct democratic control over the Commission as there would be over government departments. The most obvious difference, however, lies in the supervision of relief. The Relief Commission provided a co-ordinated management, but depended on the government departments for advice on technical details. On the other hand, the departmental system meant that the various phases of relief involved supervision by officials with the necessary technical knowledge, but which prevented an integrated relief administration. Thus it is difficult to be dogmatic about the advantages of either system. The Provincial Auditor naturally favoured the simplified bookkeeping resulting from the commission system and even recommended that every form of relief provided

<sup>70</sup> *Canadian Annual Review*, 1934, p. 283.

<sup>71</sup> *Regina Daily Star*, August 15, 1934.

<sup>72</sup> Compare *Public Accounts* 1932-33 for Treasury Department and *Public Accounts* 1934-36 for Departments of Agriculture and Municipal Affairs.

should be transferred to the Commission.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, from a technical standpoint, the departmental system would likely be favoured. It seems fair to say, however, that when relief is a purely local and temporary problem, the latter system should be quite satisfactory. Conversely, widespread relief over a period of years could be handled more efficiently by a co-ordinated management.

Another controversial issue was the relative importance of the municipal councils in relief administration. As we have seen, the original policy of the Commission was the elimination of local politics by the appointment of relief officers. Later, when the councils took over the local administration, their initiative was restricted by the fact that the Commission formulated the policies, gave detailed instructions, and provided supervision. The system after the termination of the Commission was based on the old principle that relief was primarily a local responsibility. The councils were to retain all the records concerning the applicants, and were to be responsible for all distributions and collections.<sup>74</sup> It is true that under the Commission the municipal councils had some authority, and that the government departments also had some control, yet the difference is obvious. These policies illustrate a common question in political organization—centralized planning versus local self-government. And, as one would expect, the advantages and disadvantages follow the usual pattern. Under the Commission, relief was administered quite uniformly and fairly throughout the province. Nevertheless, there were some instances of “bureaucratic” rigidity. For instance, the Commission dealt only with rural relief, which meant that milk producers, classified as businessmen, were not entitled to assistance. Consequently many dairymen had great difficulty in obtaining feed and fodder for their cattle.<sup>75</sup> Under municipal administration such cases could easily be dealt with on their merits. Furthermore, local responsibility is more likely to increase local initiative, do more than centralized planning. On the other hand, it could be said that local initiative would result in a less uniform and less equitable distribution of relief. Councillors who themselves might be on relief, might tend to be extravagant or even unfair. These arguments do little to solve the question of centralization or local self-government. We can only say that as far as the Commission is concerned, its centralization policy was not entirely rigid.

Although our study may not prove that the Commission provided the ideal system of relief administration, we can at least say that it was satisfactory. As we have seen, a tremendous and unprecedented problem confronted Saskatchewan in 1931. Three years later the Commission could be excused some justifiable pride in its record of accomplishment. Rural distress had been minimized. Agricultural rehabilitation had been considerably aided, in so far as weather conditions would permit. Many special problems had been encountered and dealt with efficiently. A great deal of expense had been saved by foresight and patience. And in spite of the magnitude of the enterprise, there was never the slightest indication of political influence, profiteering or partiality. When we consider the blunders and the corruption that are possible in the administering of a large relief program, this constitutes an enviable record. BLAIR NEATBY.

<sup>73</sup> S.R.C.—General policy file—Provincial Auditor's Report October 27, 1932.

<sup>74</sup> *Canadian Annual Review*, 1934 p. 285.

<sup>75</sup> S.R.C.—General Manager's Correspondence—Complaints file.

## TALES OF WESTERN TRAVELLERS

### Philip Turnor, Inland Surveyor

YOUNG surveyors engaged in the preliminary work on the road from Stony Rapids to Black Lake would feel a bond of brotherhood with Philip Turnor, who penetrated as far as the rapids in 1790, on a return trip of exploration and survey from Cumberland House, near the Saskatchewan, to Great Slave Lake<sup>1</sup>. Turnor's place in the early history of Western Canada is unique in that among the early explorers, he was the first full-time professional surveyor. In the case of practically all of his predecessors and contemporaries surveying and exploration were part-time activities, incidental to fur trading duties. This is not to say that Turnor's surveys had no practical object or pecuniary motive. Their purpose was clearly stated by the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company at the time of Turnor's first appointment in 1778:

Being very desirous to have the Longitude and Latitude of our several Factories ascertained and also of our Inland Settlements, and their respective Distances from one another and from the Factory on which they are dependent in order to settle with Certainty the shortest communication between them We have engaged Mr. Philip Turnor under the Title of Inland Surveyor for Three years at £.50. a year . . .<sup>2</sup>

In the years which followed, the result of this decision was a great enrichment of the world's knowledge of the geography of western North America.

Historians are indebted to the policy of the Company which required that its employees should keep journals. Turnor's (first published in 1934) are a meticulous record of observation. That Turnor was always thinking of those who were to follow is evident in his careful notes on the topography of the country, the undulations of the shore line, the distance travelled before changing direction, the number of "carrying places" and the distance of each in feet or yards, the weather, and any unusual event. Here is a typical entry:

1778 Octr. 11th Sunday at 5½ AM got underway in Pine Island Lake went about 12 Miles the Lake then opens on both sides about 6 or 7 Miles then went 2 Miles SSW keeping the S° side, then went 3 Miles S° and left a Large part of the Lake to North, the part we went about 3 Miles wide, the Lake then opens Et about 6 or 7 Miles and about 5 or 6 Miles wide, went 5 Miles SSW the Lake all this last Course drawing narrower to about ¼ Mile wide then went 2 Miles S°, the Lake then about 2 Mile wide went 2 Miles S b E in narrow part not more than ¼ Mile wide, the Lake then about 2 Miles wide went SW about 6 Miles the Lake drawing to about 1 Mile wide came to a point & saw Cumberland House bearing SSW about 1½ Mile, arrived at Cumberland House at 4 PM<sup>3</sup>

If there is any chance of mistake he elaborates carefully. Rarely does he give way to his own thoughts and usually only when his strength or patience is sorely tried, or when he feels that his observations would be of value to the Company. The

<sup>1</sup> This article is based on *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* edited by J. B. Tyrrell and published by The Champlain Society, (Toronto, 1934), pp. xviii, 611. Turnor's journals are cited hereinafter as *Journals* and Tyrrell's Introduction as *Tyrrell*.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Tyrrell*, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> *Journals*, pp. 214-15.

journals tell us little of Turnor the man, and other records tell us less. His contract as an Inland Surveyor, describes him as "aged about 26 years, of Laleham in Middlesex."<sup>4</sup> Nor have we any record of his qualifications beyond the recommendation of one William Wales, mathematical master at Christ's Hospital School.

On September 9th, 1778, Turnor left York Fort for Cumberland House, 450 miles distant. On the initial part of the journey up the Nelson to Grass River and Cranberry Portage, the *Journal* introduces us to the footweary, green Englishman who has worn "two pairs of English shoes entirely out," in the lung bursting labor of tracking, that process of hauling the canoe upstream against a turbulent current by a line or rope often hitched around the chest. As the banks or shallow water were usually strewn with sharp stones footwork was difficult and painful.

Some distance beyond the Kettle Rapids, where the Hudson Bay railway now crosses the Nelson, one of his men was swept down stream when handling a canoe and before he could be rescued some weapons, ammunition, food, clothes and half of the precious quicksilver used in the sextant for taking astronomical observations were lost. To Turnor's further irritation two of the Indians seized the opportunity presented by the temporary demoralization caused by the accident to disappear with a small keg of brandy and "had drunk or waisted about two Quarts."

Ill fortune further beset his path in the matter of the remaining bottle of quicksilver. It had been removed from the canoe and had been accidentally left at the 49th portage. The loss was not discovered until they made camp at night and the Indians refused to return for it. Turnor was now unable to take observations for latitude except when he could get a water horizon. The party reached Pine Island Lake, where Cumberland House was located, on October 11th. Turnor's journal records 61 portages varying from 50 to 1400 yards. Between September 9th and October 11th he makes note of twelve days of rain and three days when snow fell. Pine Island Lake froze on October 15th that year. There is no further observation until December 5th, when he records that he has made all the observations for Longitude and Latitude in his power but that he is now unable to use water because it freezes too fast. Again he is lost in the solitude of the snows until February 23rd when it was warm enough to take observations again.

Before Turnor reached Cumberland House a party had set out to establish a post in the Eagle Hills, where free traders (pedlars) from Canada had penetrated in an effort to intercept the flow of furs to Cumberland House and the Company's posts on the shores of Hudson Bay. Turnor set out up the river on snow shoes, accompanied by dog sleds, to determine the position of the trading post. Snow and blizzard conditions made the going so hard that in the region of Nipawin the men had to pull the sleds. Here he refers to the ruins of Finlay's house and to one occupied by Holmes. By March 17th he reached the mouth of the Setting or Sturgeon R. (near Prince Albert) where the Canadians had a settlement. Blondeau, a partner of Peter Pangman, offered him hospitality and showed no little curiosity about his business in that region. His subterfuge in disarming Mr. Blondeau is

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in *Tyrrell*, p. 62.

naively set down in the *Journal*, that his employers might see how clever he was lest he arouse suspicion. He explained that he was being sent to help Mr. Longmoor (the Company's servant in the Eagle Hills) and was only packing surveyor's instruments along the frozen Saskatchewan by dog team because he had learned to use them with the intention of visiting the South Seas, but now carried them for amusement only!

Two days later he arrived at Mr. Longmoor's wintering quarters, another house belonging to the hospitable Mr. Blondeau, and later called for the sake of distinction, Hudson House. Here Turnor had first news of the General Partnership that was to unite the forces of the traders from Canada. He also heard of the unscrupulous trading practices of William Holmes, who locked the Indians in his stockade until they had traded all their furs with him. In the face of such methods he advised his superiors that if they came to the Indians they must come in force and with enough goods to trade on the spot. Turnor had planned to go up the river to the Eagle Hills Post, nine miles below the mouth of the Battle River, but word came that warfare had broken out at that place because a troublesome Indian had been given an overdose of laudanum by the traders. Fearing that the lawless trading practices of the Canadians would cause further bloodshed and that the pedlars would use any pretext to accuse the Company servants of interfering, the little party at Hudson House packed up and abandoned fort for the trip to Cumberland House.

Leaving Cumberland House on June 9th, Turnor reached York Fort on July 15th, and his first *Journal* ends with a summary of the conditions of the trade. Turnor had only praise for his fellow servants but deplored their scanty numbers. There was a word of warning that good men would be hard to keep in the face of the enticing rewards offered by the Canadians. He suggested that settlement be made north of the Saskatchewan and that Cumberland House be used as a warehouse from whence goods could be carried by flat bottomed boats. Thus he anticipated the York boats of much later date.

Turnor spent the next seven years in the forts at the bottom of the Bay, first as a surveyor and later as a trader. He returned to London in October, 1787. Samuel Hearne had returned from Fort Churchill where he had watched the trade being cut off by the Canadians, first by Frobisher at Portage du Trait and later by Pond and others on Lake Athabasca. The exact location of this lake and the best route to it for Hudson's Bay Company purposes presented a challenging problem. For its solution the Company re-engaged Turnor, who arrived at Cumberland House in the fall of 1789. Here during the winter he gave surveying instruction to young David Thompson. To Thompson's extreme disappointment it was discovered that the leg he had crushed at Hudson House the previous winter would not be healed enough for him to undertake the Athabasca expedition, and Peter Fidler was hastily summoned to receive the first short summer course ever offered in Saskatchewan, in order to become Turnor's assistant.

With Malchom Ross as Master the party embarked on the first major survey in this province on September 13th, 1790. They were fortunate to meet a Canadian trader, Patrick Small, who was established at Pond's old fort on Lake Athabasca.

With an Indian guide the Company party set out over the usual trade route from Cumberland House up the lake to the expansion known as Namew and into what Turnor calls a small river, the Sturgeon Weir. His *Journal* gives a vivid description (along with precise measurements and observations) of the trade route for the Company servants to follow. Through the honeycombed limestone of Crooked Rapid, which menaced the feet when leading the canoes, they entered Beaver Lake (Amisk Lake) and went on to the English River (now Sturgeon Weir,) Dog Portage, Crow Lake and Portage, and Mirond Lake (also called Heron.) They entered Pelican Lake and went through the narrows. At this stage the Indian pilot deserted them and they were forced to accept Mr. Small's offer of aid, although he made it on terms that they would not trade in furs and these terms must have rankled the Company servants who regarded him as a trespasser. From Pelican Narrows the way led to Wood Lake over Pot Hole Portage. The approach to the famous portage named Frog by Alexander Mackenzie is carefully described. The Churchill, which is very irregular, consists of many lakes strung along its reaches. At the point of entry (Trade Lake) it is about two miles wide and is dotted with islands.

While camping on the shores of Nistowiak Lake, Small arranged for part of his goods to be conveyed to Lac La Ronge by the Montreal River. The main party continued on through Lake of the Bald Stone, now known as Rock Lake, where Stanley Mission was later established near the south end. They passed the bold headlands and crossed a rocky portage into Otter Lake, soon reaching Otter Portage where the goods had to be carried 1150 yards through the wood. It was aptly called the "Divel's carrying place." From there the route was through Trout Lake. Mr. Small went up to the new settlement on McIntosh Lake and the Hudson's Bay party continued to Black Bear Island Lake, whose many islands were carefully mapped. The party then went over the difficult portage at Needle Falls to Moose Lake, through the narrows along the North shore of Snake Lake and the Snake River to Sandy Lake, where Mr. Small rejoined them only to depart the next day, travelling light with four canoes for Ile à la Crosse.

With the remaining Canadians the Company servants entered a swampy waterway known as Grass Lake. About a mile above Knee Lake, they passed the Pine River (now known as Haultain River) and entered Primeau Lake, so called for Louis Primeau who had the "farthest house in the country" in 1774. They crossed the Dipper or Pelican Lake to the Deer River which was renamed the "Mudjatick," almost one hundred years later by J. B. Tyrell, the editor of the *Journals*.<sup>5</sup> As this river rises in the height of land between the Churchill and the Mackenzie systems it would have provided an excellent short cut by a portage across to Cree Lake and river and so into the Athabasca through Black Lake, but already in 1790 Turnor reports that the enterprising Canadians had found it too shallow for the big canoes and Black Lake remained a little lake at the back door to Lake Athabasca, in the soon to be forgotten north.

The party now began to work south through the Leaf and Drum rapids to Narrow Rapids Lake to enter Ile à la Crosse Lake. On October 7th they reached

<sup>5</sup> Tyrrell also named the Haultain, after Chief Justice Sir Frederick Haultain, *Journals*, p. 351, note.

Small's house, which was built on the point on the west side of the lake where the Roman Catholic Mission stands to-day. Again they were embarrassed by the friendly hospitality of the Canadians. Three of their men were in no condition to build a house because of injuries and when Mr. Small offered them two houses for wintering purposes they were in no position to decline.

During this northern voyage the problem of providing food for the party was the responsibility of Mr. Ross but it appears to be prominent in the minds of all. Often the nets were set and no fish were caught. At Ile à la Crosse the Hudson's Bay Company's twine was too coarse for effective nets. Again Mr. Small came to their rescue by proffering some of his own supply. Turnor reveals a touch of impatience at the delaying bureaucracy of the Company: "I well knew before I came from Cumberland House that the twine would not answer but if I had waited until we had been properly supplied I might have remained to the end of my contract and never have stirred this way."<sup>6</sup> On December 19th the men and the Chipewyans were able to bring in two sleds of fresh moose meat. Supplies were more plentiful for a time but by the end of April the servants of the Honorable Company had sunk so low as to welcome "some provisions such as in appearance would rather have disgraced one of Your Honor's Carrion Trees."<sup>7</sup>

Ile à la Crosse was not free of ice until May 19th. The party, provided with provisions for nine days only, paid their thanks to Mr. Small and set out on May 30th, 1791, up the narrow arm of the lake to Clearwater Lake (Churchill L.) and through the Narrows to Buffalo Lake (Peter Pond Lake). By June 1st they were at the Methy River where they were not in camp half an hour before they were joined by Alexander Mackenzie, who was returning from Lake Athabasca for England where he intended to study surveying and the taking of astronomical observations for what proved to be his historic journey "from Canada by land." Again the hospitality of the north was shown, for Mackenzie, seeing that Turnor's party was ill prepared for the journey which he ascertained to be for discovery only, wrote to his cousin Roderic at Chipewyan to provide storage for the belongings of these kindred spirits.

The customary route to the Athabasca was across Methy Portage to the Clearwater but they only had seven days provisions left and Mackenzie had assured them that there was none beyond the Methy Portage. On the advice of Laurent Leroux, a clerk in Mackenzie's firm and the Indians, it was decided to take an alternate route to the Clearwater which was considerably longer and partly unknown but which would provide better opportunities of securing game. The going was very rough and very slow. At one time Turnor sent Peter Fidler out to explore the next portage because his feet were too tender to go himself without the English shoes which were apparently worn out again. At another time the Chipewyans, who were also in unknown territory, wanted to return to Methy Portage, and when Turnor laughed at them they proposed throwing away the canoes and crossing overland to the Clearwater, so afraid were they of the unknown

<sup>6</sup> *Journals*, p. 359.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 363.

pitfalls of going down stream. As Turnor puts it, "it is dangerous to turn a Point in a rapid without knowing what is below."<sup>8</sup> They reached Pillicon River (Clearwater) on June 21st and passed an empty Canadian house on the opposite shore from where Fort McMurray was built. It is interesting to note that Turnor found potatoes in thriving condition planted in the garden. They were now at the junction of the Clearwater and the Athabasca. On June 25th they passed the house built by Peter Pond in the momentous year 1778 when the course of his fortunes went under the first cloud after the murder of John Ross, in which he was implicated. The south shore of Lake Athabasca was in sight three days later and it was a welcome one to poor Peter Fidler whose feet were badly infected.

At Fort Chipewyan, the Canadian Settlement on an island in Lake Athabasca, they were kindly received by Alexander Mackenzie's cousin. Turnor had the greatest admiration for this trading post which he called the "Grand Magazine of the Athapiscow Country." After a rest of four days they had engaged a Chipewyan pilot and were underway again for Great Slave Lake, which they reached on July 19th.

While resting at the Canadian post an Indian told Turnor of a route out of the North East corner of Great Slave Lake which might lead across to Chesterfield Inlet, but the old man was adamant that the season was too far gone for our intrepid voyager to attempt it. Turnor was very much interested in the route because it coincided with the account he got from the Chipewyans at Ile à la Crosse. The short cut from Chesterfield Inlet would give the company an opportunity to hold the Athabasca territory, but because of the lateness of the season he resolved to return to Lake Athabasca. He was more interested in a way out of the east end of that lake to the Churchill because he now knew that the previous map makers had considered it to be much farther north than it was, and therefore more accessible to Churchill than Chesterfield Inlet. This would be the route through Black Lake.

Reaching Lake Athabasca again on August 12th Turnor hastened to try out his theory of an eastward route to Fort Churchill. He passed the mouth of the William River and the McFarlane River where he relates a fable of the Chipewyans about the giant beaver and giant Indians who ate them and lived there long ago. They rounded Poplar Point and entered the long arm of the Athabasca, travelling past the present site of Fond-du-Lac on the north shore. Rounding a small island they entered Stone River where Turnor draws a beautiful picture of the river running wide and deep past a grassy bay, surrounded by willows and on through gentle rising hills covered with small pine. He speaks of a chain of small lakes leading to Deer Lake. He may mean the Fond-du-Lac River leading to Wollaston Lake and Reindeer Lake. They ascended Stone River for about three and one-half miles but they terminated their journey there with a "lopt pine tree," (which was later found by David Thompson in 1796) because the Stony Rapids would have required at least three portages. Time

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 384.

was running out. Turnor had not seen Black Lake or the waterway east but he intended to return to the "lopt pine tree."

They returned along the north shore of Lake Athabasca to the Canadian settlement where they were to winter in poorly constructed huts which they built for themselves. Peter Fidler wintered with the Indians. By this time Turnor had become convinced that the Company would have to establish posts in the Athabasca region if they hoped to compete successfully with the Canadians. The *Journal* presents this view in vigorous and cogent terms. But it must not be supposed that he confines himself exclusively to geographic and economic data, for there are some important sidelights on frontier life in the fur country. An instance of this is provided in his description of Fidler's return from winter quarters:

. . . he and the Indian Men came to the Houses leaving the Women behind for fear of their being taken from them by the Canadians, who make a common practice of it, one of the Indians had his Gun taken from him under pretence of the Indian having taken a Woman clandestinely from him two years ago, which the Indian did not seem to deny but said it was what the Canadians frequently did to them . . .<sup>9</sup>

Turnor's return to Cumberland House was by way of the Athabasca to the Clearwater and across the Methy Portage, which he describes very carefully, to the route they had traversed before they met Alexander Mackenzie the previous year. By June 27th, 1792, they were at Cumberland House and on July 17th reached York Fort.

Except for a short trip of about twenty-four days duration up the Nelson and Grass rivers, Turnor's life work in the North West was over. He returned to England late in 1792. Here he was employed by the Hudson's Bay Company in preparing a map containing the results of his surveys, and this in turn was incorporated in the various editions of the famous Arrowsmith maps, upon which most maps of Canada have been based down to recent times.<sup>10</sup>

Turnor's later career was as a "Teacher of Navigation and the Lunar Observations, Prospect Row, Dock Head, Rotherhithe," but it is safe to say that his most famous pupils were those whom he had taught in the far away North-West—David Thompson and Peter Fidler.

MARGARET MESSER

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 448. Punctuations have been inserted in this extract to facilitate reading.

<sup>10</sup> Tyrrell, p. 93.

## Some Memories of a J.P.

I HAVE just been re-reading *Mrs. Mike*, and it brought to my mind how much the administration of justice in Golden Valley and Sunshine Valley resembles in atmosphere the friendly but strict recognition of justice tempered with mercy of Sergeant Mike of the R.C.M.P. at Hudson Hope and Grouard. There have been no “causes célèbres”; just the ordinary disputes, differences of opinion as to right and wrong, and the minor peccadillos of a generally law-abiding rural community.

Memory goes back to the pioneer days when we had an R.C.M.P. station at Alsask in the person of Corp. Bert Mosses, who regularly patrolled the newly settled district, as much to see that there was no one hurt, or ill and not being looked after, as for dealing with infractions of the law.

One morning he dropped in and said, “Look here, old dear, could you accommodate myself and a prisoner for supper tonight? I have got to go and arrest a man for bootlegging liquor—only wish I knew where he got the stuff.”

Of course I was quite agreeable and it was arranged that they would be back at 5 p.m. I got as good a supper as a bachelor could devise, but six o'clock came and went and the anticipated guests had not showed up. So I demolished my feast, or as much of it as I could. About 7.30 two horsemen cantered by on the trail, one of whom was the R.C.M.P. who waved but continued on his journey.

Next time he called on patrol he explained. “Sorry to disappoint you, old dear, but it couldn't be helped. When I got to the bloke's place and told him what I had come for, he said: ‘O.K., tie in your hoss and give him a sheaf, and come in and we'll have a bite of dinner, after which I'll ride with you peaceable to the hoosegow.’ So it wasn't necessary to make any demands on your hospitality.”

Civil cases were numerous in the early days and were complicated and difficult: suits for wages and for small debts under \$100.00 But they generally revolved around people who had neighboured for years, borrowing or lending this and that; doing the odd day's work for one another without keeping any track of who was obligated to whom. Then they fell out about something and could not reach a settlement and took legal action in the J.P. Court, which charged \$1 for a hearing, unless unduly long, but the maximum charge was \$2. The claim the plaintiff brought into Court would be balanced by a counter-claim by the defendant and each would have additional counter-claims going back, in one instance, over a period of seven years. Solomon's decision in regard to which was the rightful mother of the baby was easy compared with a feud between two former good neighbours who had fallen out.

But there was one very interesting case because of its happy ending. It was one of those involved cases of claim, counter-claim and counter-counter-claim and was brought up here from the Mayfield district, as apparently neither party wanted it heard by the J.P. down there. He knew too much about them. It lasted

<sup>1</sup> C. Evans Sargent of Eyre, Sask., is a Justice of the Peace and was Secretary-Treasurer of the Rural Municipality of Mantario from 1919 to 1947.

all day and was basically a case of diamond cut diamond: two parties both given to sharp practice within the law, who had each been trying to best the other, and it was all the more difficult because one was a woman and both had decidedly unenviable reputations.

Each had several witnesses and there were some spectators, which meant a very busy time for my wife, as of course they all had to have dinner: a little item in rural areas evidently overlooked in setting fees to be charged by a J.P. When the evidence was all in, after an hour's deliberation, a verdict was rendered. To the immense surprise of the J.P., albeit with many groans, curses and maledictions, settlement was made then and there. He was more surprised when, just before leaving, the lady in the case came back into the house, shook hands all around and thanked him for the verdict. Instinctively he suspected his judgment had leaned too greatly in her favour. But after she had driven away, and quite unaware of the attitude of his opponent in the case, the other party came in and also thanked him for the verdict. So that night he was able to sleep quite comfortably in the knowledge that both of these litigants, who had been trying to "do the other," had gone away each satisfied that he or she had got the best of the other—so probably for once an exact measure of justice had been meted out.

By the inhabitants of Golden Valley the members of the R.C.M.P. are always regarded as friends, even by offenders against the law; ready to understand and sympathize with the frailties of human nature, even when they have to prosecute offenders. Justice in the Valley does not mean severe technical interpretation of the law, but rather a sympathetic attempt to obtain both sides of the case and to decide it by plain common sense, and so far as may be possible to temper justice with mercy, and not forgetting a touch of humour.

It is interesting to note that in thirty years there has never been an appeal from a decision. There was on one occasion a petition widely signed complaining of undue severity in a sentence for theft of one month in jail imposed by the Mayor of Alsask and the Golden Valley J.P. sitting jointly, to which the defendant had pled guilty. But the Attorney General declined to act on the petition.

The funniest case in the Mantario district—before it was Mantario—and generally known as This Side of the Hill and The Other Side of the Hill, depending of which side you resided, (later Sunshine Valley and Golden Valley) occurred in 1911. It pertained to Sunshine Valley, which had two J.P.'s living within four miles of each other.

W.W. T.....J.P., sued George F.....J.P., for stealing his cow. Not only that but he insisted on hearing and did hear the case himself, without calling in the R.C.M.P. His house was full of spectators. George F.....admitted taking the cow, which apparently had broken loose from her tether, but claimed he did not *steal* the cow because he did not *know*—though he admitted he had a mighty good guess—whose it was. He *just took care of it* and incidentally *milked it* until ownership was claimed. Verdict: Guilty—return the cow before 6 p.m.—or else. The defendant said, "Come and get it." And to restore the community good feeling that was what W.W.T.....had to do.

(Note—the cow was a Holstein; the only other cow within a radius of four miles was a Jersey!).

## The S.G.G.A. Convention of 1910

I FIRST joined the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association at Earl Grey about the year 1908. The President of the local was Frank Binnie, one of the early settlers at Earl Grey who still resides at his farm there.

The first General Convention of the S.G.G.A. which I attended was at Prince Albert in January, 1910. This was one of the most history-making conventions ever held by the organized farmers of Saskatchewan. At the district conventions which were held some time prior to the General Convention, resolutions were passed demanding that the Saskatchewan government launch a program of building and operating elevators throughout the province. This was the question of outstanding importance at the General Convention, and the government felt impelled to send the Hon. W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture, to present its views to the delegates.

Mr. Motherwell, who had been one of the chief organizers of the Territorial Grain Growers' Association, indicated to the delegates that the government did not feel inclined to launch out into such a tremendous program of building and operating elevators at practically every point in Saskatchewan without first of all having a thorough investigation of the whole question. This suggestion did not meet with a favourable reception by the delegates, many of whom accused the government of stalling, and Mr. Motherwell did not get a very good hearing. However, after the atmosphere of the Convention had cooled down somewhat, they listened to his proposals, which involved a Royal Commission being appointed to investigate the whole question.

The government was agreeable to having the S.G.G.A. appoint two of the three-man Commission. The Convention finally agreed to this proposal and Fred W. Green of Moose Jaw, Secretary of the S.G.G.A., and Mr. George Langley, (later the Hon. George Langley) were appointed as our representatives. The Chairman, appointed by the government, was Dr. Robert Magill of Dalhousie University. This Commission held hearings at many points throughout the province to discuss the matter with, and receive suggestions from farmers as to how best to provide satisfactory elevator facilities. Mr. Langley later told me that the first germ of the idea which later developed into the co-operative elevator system came from Mr. Neish at Carlyle, Saskatchewan. Mr. Langley and the other members of the Commission were favourably impressed with this suggestion and discussed it with farmers who attended the hearings at other points in the province, and finally made a report recommending that the government provide 85% of the money necessary to erect elevators at any and every place where the farmers would provide the balance of 15%. Organization meetings were held throughout the province and shares were sold to farmers.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. George F. Edwards of Saskatoon has been a well-known figure in the farm movement in Saskatchewan for many years. The presidency of the S.G.G.A. and of the Canadian Council of Agriculture are two of the many elective offices which he has held. He played an active part in organizing most of the larger producers' co-operatives in Saskatchewan and was also a member of the provincial Debt Adjustment Board.

Finally, the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company came into existence in 1912. Its later history is fairly well known and is a matter of record. It was responsible for remedying many of the abuses which had existed in connection with the handling of farmers' grain and was a financial success from the beginning. The shares sold to farmers were placed at \$7.50 per share and the farmer was limited to a maximum of ten shares. No further money was required from the shareholders. As a matter of fact, each year the face value of the shares was added to and interest of 8% was paid on the face value of the shares each year. When the Co-operative Elevator Company was finally taken over by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool in 1926, my shares, which I had taken out in 1912, were worth \$145 each.

At the same Convention of 1910, at which steps were taken to launch the co-operative elevator system, another matter of outstanding importance was engrossing the attention of the delegates. This was the question of some plan of hail insurance which would give more reasonable rates than those being paid to the hail insurance companies. At first the only method the delegates could think of for providing hail insurance at reasonable rates was to ask the government to undertake this service. The great majority of the delegates seemed to be in approval of government action to solve this problem, until one delegate, Mr. J. E. Paynter of Tantallon, came forward with an alternative suggestion which involved the creation of a co-operative hail insurance plan. His idea was that by levying a flat rate of 2c per acre on all the wild lands of Saskatchewan, and on those municipalities which came under the Act, sufficient funds could be provided to indemnify those who would become insured under the Act. The general idea met with the approval of the delegates and a committee of three was appointed, namely, J. E. Paynter, E. G. Hingley, and A. E. Wilson. The matter was taken up with the government, which provided sufficient funds to carry on the educational campaign, equip the office, and pay whatever expenses were incurred prior to the actual organization of The Saskatchewan Municipal Hail Insurance Association, which finally was incorporated and operated for the 1913 crop. At the beginning of the plan a levy of 4c per acre was made on all lands in any municipality which voted to come under the Act with no withdrawal privileges. The provisions of the Act have been changed from time to time to ensure that losses could be paid in full and since the changes made in the Act in 1918, which provide for a flat rate with the addition of a seeded acreage rate, after the losses are known, losses have always been paid in full.

The 1910 Convention was memorable not only because of the launching of these two schemes, but was also the one at which the Hon. Charles Dunning, later Premier of Saskatchewan, and Minister of Finance in the Dominion government, attended his first farmers' convention, where he made such a favourable impression that he was elected a director, and later became manager of the Co-operative Elevator Company when it was organized. Many pioneers of the farm movement found it difficult to attend conventions and Mr. Dunning was no exception—lacking the price of a hotel room, he slept in the basement of the church where the convention was held!

## HISTORIC SITES

### Cumberland House

ON Saturday, September 3, 1774, Samuel Hearne, servant of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company, chose the site of the Company's first inland post, Cumberland House, which became the first permanent settlement in Saskatchewan.<sup>1</sup> The post was built to meet the competition of the Pedlars (free traders) from Montreal, who had been cutting off the Indian trade with the Bay. The significance of the building of Cumberland House was that the Company had adopted the Pedlars' policy of going to the Indians with trade goods. The outcome was the bitter trade rivalry between the men from Hudson Bay and the men from Montreal, which was to last until the union of 1821. Within a few years after the building of Cumberland, the Hudson's Bay Company was meeting aggression with aggression, building post beside post, and advancing further inland each season with its rivals to new unworked beaver districts. Cumberland House was too closely beleaguered by rival posts to become an important trading centre, but it did become a distributing and administrative centre.

The reason given by Hearne for the choice of the site was its convenient location near three bands of Indians.<sup>2</sup> However, he must have been aware of the strategic advantages of Cumberland Lake at the junction of three canoe routes. The Saskatchewan river led to the west and southwest; the Sturgeon-Weir system led to the Churchill and Athabaska regions to the northwest; while the Grass river flowed northeastward toward York Factory. Year after year this post was to see the fur brigades travelling westward with trade goods in the autumn and eastward with furs in the spring. The voyageurs—singing, and dressed in their best costumes—would paddle up to the post with a dash to create an effect<sup>3</sup>. Here factors from Athabaska or the other side of the Rockies stopped

<sup>1</sup> There is some doubt concerning the origin of the name. Prince Rupert (1619-1682), first governor of the Company, numbered among his titles that of Duke of Cumberland. Isaac Cowie was probably repeating a tradition in the fur trade when he said that it was named after William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland (1712-1765), who had suppressed the Jacobite rising in Scotland in 1744-46. The Montreal fur trade was dominated by Scots, and some of them were Highlanders or sons of Highlanders who had been active in 1745. No matter which Duke of Cumberland the post was named after, Hearne could not have chosen a name more obnoxious to the Scottish Pedlars.

<sup>2</sup> *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*, J. B. Tyrrell, ed., (Toronto, 1934), cited hereafter as *Journals*. The site was on Cumberland lake, known to the Indians as Min-nis-tec-ko-min-nahik-oo-ska-we-sah-ka-he-kun. See J. Hines, *Red Indians*, (London, 1915), p. 231. The fur traders generally called it Pine Island Lake, and sometimes Sturgeon lake. (Note that the name Pine Island Lake was a misnomer as the trees native to the region are spruce.) The post was built on the north side of Pine island, an island approximately two miles wide separating Cumberland lake from the Saskatchewan river. Channels at either end of the island, drained the lake into the Saskatchewan: Bigstone river at the west end, and a longer channel called Tearing river at the eastern. About the spring of 1875 ice jams blocked the old passage of the Saskatchewan, forcing the water to cut a new channel through the low, marshy country to the Sturgeon river, and up that river into the western end of Cumberland lake: the water then drained back into the Saskatchewan by Tearing river. See O. Klotz, "Overland Hudson Bay Expedition," *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 13, pt. 2, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Captain Back, the Arctic explorer, described his boat crew's preparations to approach the post in style. "The crew had dressed themselves out in all their finery,—silver bands, tassels, and feathers in their hats,—intending to approach the station with some effect; but, unfortunately for the poor fellows, the rain fell in torrents, their feathers drooped, and such was the accumulation of mud, that it was necessary to wade a full mile before we could land at Cumberland House." Sir G. Back, *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition*, (London, 1836), p. 64.

to exchange the gossip of half a continent. It was the base from which overland Arctic exploration parties in the 19th century set out to fill in the blank spaces on the map of North America. The list of visitors to Cumberland was a veritable roll call of the fur trade.

Cumberland House was too far from the buffalo plains to enjoy a bountiful supply of meat. The inhabitants, like those in other posts in the forest region, subsisted almost entirely on fish, and even this monotonous fare could not be depended on. Four months after their first arrival Hearne's men were reduced to two scanty meals a day, and a month later to a small handful of dried meat and four ounces of other meat a day per man. This famine condition was temporarily alleviated in February by some Indians killing five moose. With the coming of spring, wild fowl brought an increase in the food supply.

During the summer of 1775 while Hearne was absent at York Factory, the carpenter and two other men remained at the post to work on more permanent buildings. In October, Matthew Cocking took command of Cumberland House. The Pedlars, passing through on their way to wintering posts, called on the new officer. Alexander Henry, the elder, wrote that though they were unwelcome guests, Cocking treated them with civility. That winter Henry, on his way to the plains from the Henry-Frobishers' post on Beaver Lake, again visited the post.<sup>4</sup>

With the posts of the Pedlars astraddle the canoe routes leading to Cumberland, Cocking adopted the tactics of sending men out to meet the Indians. They tried to persuade the Indians to paddle past the rival posts with their furs, and bring them to Cumberland. Robert Longmoor was sent up the Sturgeon-Weir watercourse in the spring of 1776, but in bringing the Indians past the Frobishers' post, a brawl ensued, and Longmoor returned without furs. Up the Saskatchewan, William Walker was more successful, bringing down 277 beaver skins worth of fur.<sup>5</sup>

Until the union of the two companies in 1821, Cumberland House was at least the nominal administrative centre of the inland posts. William Tomison<sup>6</sup> took charge in 1777, and proceeded to organize the trade in the Saskatchewan valley against the Pedlars. The governor of York Factory had always been superior officer to the "inlanders," but in 1786 Tomison was made governor of York Factory with the proviso that he dwell inland. Although Cumberland House was supposed to be his headquarters, Tomison spent most of his time travelling between the Company's Saskatchewan posts, or stationed at the post where the competition was most acute. Pugnacious Governor Williams<sup>7</sup> made Cumberland

<sup>4</sup> A. Henry, *Travels and Adventures* (Toronto, 1901), pp. 262, 268.

<sup>5</sup> A. S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71* (London, 1939), pp. 317-318.

<sup>6</sup> For a biographical sketch of Tomison see Hearne's *Journals*, Appendix A. Except for an interval of three years, Tomison was in the service of the Company from 1760 to 1811. A disciplinarian and organizer, he played a leading role in the expansion of the Company's trade up the Saskatchewan valley.

<sup>7</sup> William Williams, an ex-captain of the East Indiaman, was ever ready for a fight. His great *coup* was the mounting of cannon at the foot of the Grand Rapids on the Saskatchewan river in the spring of 1819, and the capture of some of the Northwesters.

his capital in 1818 while directing the last rounds of the bitter struggle with the Northwesters.

The foundation of a new Hudson's Bay post was begun on the other side of the tiny bay about 1790; Magnus Twatt completed it in 1793 or 1794.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile the North West Company had erected a post close by. Previous to its erection in 1793 the Northwesters had each spring on their way eastward cached pemmican on the river bank near The Pas; this was used by the brigades for the return journey to their posts. The loss of a cache led to the establishment of "The Depot" as the Northwesters often called their post. In 1793 "The Depot" had in storage 36 bags of pemmican and 800 pounds of pounded meat and grease. Two years later 300 bags of pemmican were sent down the Saskatchewan from Fort George to "The Depot."<sup>9</sup>

Relations between the rival posts at Cumberland fluctuated according to the temperament of the chief traders who happened to be in charge of the respective posts, and the intensity of the struggle at the moment between the companies throughout the northwest. Thus David Harmon, Northwester, and Peter Fidler, Hudson's Bay man, in the winter of 1806-07 seem to have spent many a pleasant evening together over a game of cards.<sup>10</sup> But the situation in 1817 is described by Ross Cox thus:

. . . the rival companies had large forts here, which were well fortified; but no breach of the peace had occurred during the winter between the respective traders. Friendly intercourse was out of the question, and a suspicious kind of armed neutrality was preserved on each side.<sup>11</sup>

It was at Cumberland in June, 1819, that Colin Robertson, of the Hudson's Bay Company, escaped from the Northwesters by breaking his parole. At Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabaska he had been taken prisoner the previous October and was being carried down to Montreal by the Northwesters' spring brigade. From within the Hudson's Bay post at Cumberland Robertson wrote, "The gates are shut and every man is armed. Our force is only ten men including the gentlemen—our opponents forty."<sup>12</sup> However, the Northwesters did not attempt to recapture Robertson.

Members of the Franklin Arctic expedition spent part of the following winter at Cumberland. The posts were described as "log-houses, built without

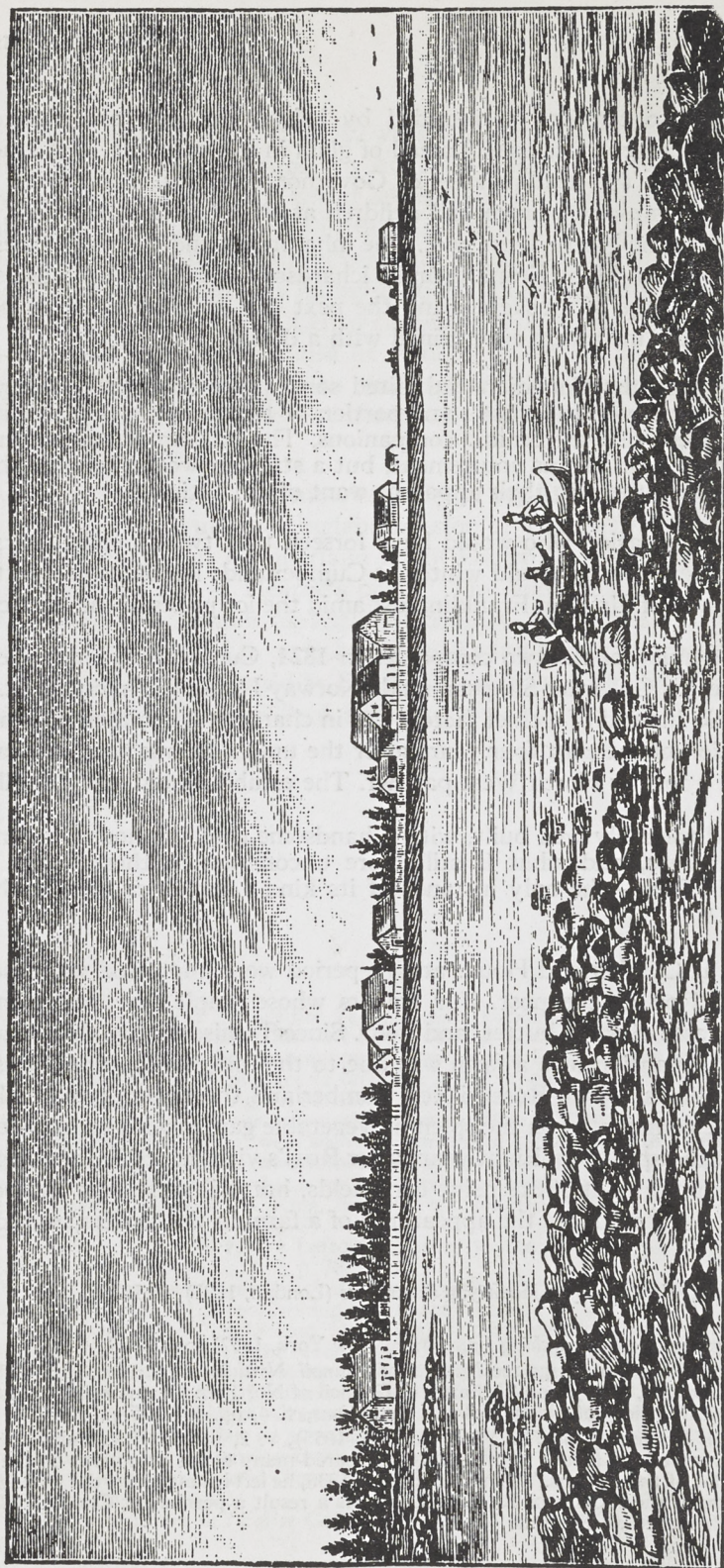
<sup>8</sup> *Journals*, pp. 586, 588. The "tiny bay" is to-day a willow flat as the water has receded. The author is greatly indebted to Mr. J. P. Brady, field officer of the Department of Natural Resources stationed at Cumberland House, for information about location of posts, missions and other data. Mr. Brady also pointed out the numerous references, and quotations from the Cumberland Journals found in M. Giraud's *Le Metis Canadien* (Paris, 1945); unfortunately the limitation of space did not enable the author to utilize these.

<sup>9</sup> William McGillivray built a post at the narrows of Cumberland lake in the spring of 1793, but the North West Company decided that the post should be beside the post of the English company. See Morton, *op. cit.*, pp. 347, 440, 451 and 460. An interesting reminder of the days when voyageurs carried pemmican across the island from the Saskatchewan to the depot appears on a topographical map issued in 1949. A broken double line indicating "road not well travelled" is called Pemmican Portage.

<sup>10</sup> J. B. Tyrrell, "Peter Fidler, Trader and Surveyor", *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 1913, pt. 2, p. 125.

<sup>11</sup> R. Cox, *Columbia River* (London, 1832), p. 224.

<sup>12</sup> *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book*, E. E. Rich. ed., (Toronto, 1939), p. 86.



Cumberland House in the 1880's

—from a sketch in C.R. Tuttle,  
Our North Land (Toronto, 1885)

much attention to comfort, surrounded by lofty stockades, and flanked by bastions."<sup>13</sup> Parchment was used instead of glass in the windows. The Hudson's Bay post was then the headquarters of Governor Williams. There were thirty men and nearly as many women and children at the Hudson's Bay post, and a larger number at the North West post. The inhabitants and their activities were described at some length by Franklin and Richardson. The New Year was ushered in with the discharge of musketry, and the next day guests feasted on beaver. In the evening the men were entertained with a dance,

... in which the Canadians exhibited some grace and much agility; and they contrived to infuse some portion of their activity and spirits into the steps of their female companions. The half-breed women are passionately fond of this amusement, but a stranger would imagine the contrary on witnessing their apparent want of animation.<sup>14</sup>

On that festive occasion who would have foreseen that twenty-eight years later another Arctic expedition would winter at Cumberland: Richardson's party setting out in search of Sir John Franklin, lost amid the ice packs of the Arctic sea.<sup>15</sup>

After the union of the two companies in 1821, Cumberland House declined in importance, for Governor Simpson made Norway House the main depot. Some winters a clerk, instead of a chief factor, was in charge.<sup>16</sup> Alexander Ross has left us a description of the post four years after the union. It was then in charge of James Leith, a former North West partner. The establishment was described as

large and tolerably well built, with a handsome dwelling-house, having glass windows, and what is still more uncommon in these parts, a gallery in front—the only instance of its kind I have yet seen in the country.<sup>17</sup>

Visitors at Cumberland House at this period were impressed with the agriculture carried on at the post. Fur traders whose staple fare was pemmican enjoyed the taste of milk, butter, and flour. Since Tomison's day there had been a garden; its expansion into a farm was due to the imagination and industry of Governor Williams. When Ross visited Cumberland there were two milch cows and a bull. He commented on the splendid vegetable garden with a sundial erected by the Franklin expedition. Eight years after Ross's visit, in 1833, John MacLean was cheered by the sight of extensive corn-fields, horned cattle, pigs and poultry, "which gave the place more the appearance of a farm in the civilized world, than

<sup>13</sup> Sir J. Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey to Polar Seas* (London, 1823), p. 55.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>15</sup> Sir J. Richardson, *Arctic Searching Expedition* (New York, 1852), pp. 37-38.

<sup>16</sup> For names of officers in charge see *Minutes of Council Northern Department*, 1821-31, R. H. Fleming, ed., (Toronto, 1940), and "Minutes of Council of Northern Department, 1830 to 1843, in *State Historical Society of North Dakota, Collections*, v. 4, pp. 644-865.

<sup>17</sup> A. Ross, *Fur Hunters of the Far West* (London, 1855), v. 2, p. 217. Ross found that Leith (in charge of Cumberland House from 1822-1829) shared many of his own views on the need of improving the lot of the Indians. When Leith died in 1838, he left his estate for the propagation of Christianity among the Indians of Rupert's Land. As a result a permanent Church of England mission was established at The Pas.

of a trading post.<sup>18</sup> Chief Factor Lewis's weather records of 1839-1840 contain passing references to the crops: on August 1, 1839, he commenced harvesting barley; on May 17, 1840, the wheat appeared above ground, though ice still lay on the lake.<sup>19</sup> The scientist Sir Henry Lefroy, who saw a field of wheat being harvested in August, 1843, writing years later, said that nobody then thought that the Saskatchewan region was an agricultural country, the summer frosts being given as the reason; however, Lefroy suspected that at the bottom of that belief lay a fear that agriculture would be ruinous to the fur trade.<sup>20</sup> After reading references by earlier travellers to the agricultural endeavours of the traders, one is a little disappointed to be informed by H. Y. Hind that in 1858 only ten acres were cultivated.<sup>21</sup>

Missionary activity at Cumberland House began about 1840 when it became the outpost of the Church of England mission at The Pas,<sup>22</sup> but the date of the building of a church at Cumberland is not known. In 1884 there was a chapel standing near the site of Hearne's post.<sup>23</sup> The veteran missionary, Rev. John Hines, built a new church in 1901.<sup>24</sup> Roman Catholic missionaries from Red river visited Cumberland as early as the 1850's but a mission was not established until 1880 by Father Bonnald.<sup>25</sup> Father Charlebois—later Bishop Charlebois—served this mission from 1887 to 1899.

BRUCE PEEL

<sup>18</sup> J. MacLean, *Notes of a Twenty-five Years' Service* (London, 1849), p. 224. At variance with MacLean's description is that of Richard King, who as a member of Back's Arctic expedition visited Cumberland House the same summer. "The house a few years ago was in most excellent repair, and exhibited a very productive farm the effect of the continued care and attention of Governor Williams, who had a great partiality for agricultural pursuits. A vast change, however, had taken place at the time of our arrival; the house was all but falling to pieces; the implements of tillage, and the capacious barns, were silent monuments of waste; the horses were becoming wild, the oxen occasional truants; the cows, although they went "to the milk-pail twice a day," gave by no means a Virgilian quantity of that sober and nutritious beverage; and a solitary hog stood every chance of dying without issue." R. King, *Narrative of a Journey*, (London, 1836), v. 1. p. 54.

<sup>19</sup> Sir J. Richardson, *op. cit.*, pp. 390-91.

<sup>20</sup> W. S. Wallace, ed., "Sir Henry Lefroy's Journey to the North-West," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 1938, pt. 2, p. 78.

<sup>21</sup> H. Y. Hind, *Narrative of Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition, etc.* (London, 1860), v. 1, p. 449. Contains a sketch of the post looking toward the lake.

<sup>22</sup> As The Pas was called Cumberland, in early missionary records, it must not be mistaken for Cumberland House. Jane Ross, the second wife of an early incumbent at the Pas, Archdeacon Hunter, rendered great assistance to her husband in his work of translating the Bible and other religious works into Cree. Mrs. Hunter was born at Cumberland House about 1822. Cumberland House was also the birthplace of Alexander Kennedy Isbister (1822-1883). Of some prominence in Britain as an educationalist, he advocated the termination of the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly, and vigorously championed the cause of the Métis.

<sup>23</sup> C. R. Tuttle, *Our North Land* (Toronto, 1885), p. 330.

<sup>24</sup> J. Hines, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-02.

<sup>25</sup> A. G. Morice, *Histoire de l'Eglise Catholique dans L'ouest Canadien*, (St. Boniface, 1921-23), v. 3, p. 7.

## Book Reviews

THE SASKATCHEWAN. By *Marjorie Wilkins Campbell*. Illustrated by Illingworth H. Kerr. (Rivers of America, edited by Hervey Allen and Carl Carmer), New York, Toronto: Rinehart and Co., [Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Co.] 1950. Pp. 400. \$4.50.

THIS is the 41st volume in the Rivers of America series and the second history of the Saskatchewan river to appear within the last twelve months. Marjorie Wilkins Campbell is a Toronto writer who lived in the Kelliher district as a child and later went to school in Swift Current. Some years ago she published a book based on her father's reminiscences of pioneering on a farm north of Qu'Appelle.<sup>1</sup> She spent three years in collecting the material and in writing her version of "the Saskatchewan story." She also made a summer pilgrimage to the sources of the river and followed its course as far as she could do so by train and by airplane.

In her preface, Mrs. Campbell tells us that she selected the material which she liked "out of the rich mass available," material which to her "gives a fairly comprehensive picture of the people over . . . two hundred years and two thousand miles." She kept her story "almost entirely within sight of Saskatchewan water." She did not try to satisfy all those who live along the river. People on the prairies she tells us, are "quick to spot a fault and equally quick to see and to try to remedy a need . . . the characteristic . . . makes for a mighty nice, often interesting people" (p. 250). Many prairie readers will prefer to decide for themselves the degree to which Mrs. Campbell has succeeded in giving a comprehensive picture of the people of the Saskatchewan country during the past two hundred years. The present reviewer will attempt to answer this question from the point of view of the historian and, at the same time, compare *The Saskatchewan* with *Blankets and Beads, A History of the Saskatchewan River*, published by Mr. J. G. MacGregor in 1949.<sup>2</sup>

In the chapter, "Geography Lesson," and throughout the book, Mrs. Campbell describes the Saskatchewan in the manner of an enthusiastic tourist who sees the river for the first time. She cannot have, of course, that sureness of touch which Mr. MacGregor has gained through long and close acquaintance with the Saskatchewan country. Mrs. Campbell knows more of the South Branch than of the North and she has been attracted particularly by "the clusters of lights," the prairie towns and villages which can be seen from the river's edge. Mr. MacGregor, on the other hand, considers the North Branch to be of more historical importance than the South and he gives prominence to the history of that branch. His book is primarily a survey of the fur trade.

The Saskatchewan, Mrs. Campbell believes, "had its day as one of the greatest highways of discovery and commerce on the continent, perhaps in the entire world." She devotes half of her space to describing that "swift, glorious, unforgettable day." She is less concerned with details of trade than with human interest stories about the traders, great and small, whose business took them

<sup>1</sup> *The Soil is Not Enough*. Toronto: The MacMillan Co., 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Reviewed in *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. II, No. 3, pp. 35-36.

up the river. She writes in lively fashion about "her ladyship, my squaw," "the bits of brown" born of Indian mothers," the disposal of John Rowand's bones. Mrs. Campbell quotes freely from letters and journals and usually with an eye to quaintness of style rather than significance of content. Mr. MacGregor's description of the fur trade, on the other hand, is preferable for those who want facts about its organization, the provisioning of brigades, the structure of forts and the actual conduct of trade.

Since the river played little part in the development of the West in the fifty years following 1870 there came, says Mrs. Campbell, "a hiatus in the Saskatchewan's story." In later decades the river regained importance when talk of irrigation filled the air. Mrs. Campbell therefore divides the last half of her book into sections which she calls "Hiatus" and "Waterway." In "Hiatus" she includes an account of treaty-making and the rebellion of 1885 which touches upon well known ground. She could have made an original contribution to the writing of Western history in her discussion of the period after 1885 but, instead, she contents herself with sketches of minor aspects of prairie life. She writes of steamboating, of washing gold, of hunting both for big game in the mountains and for the sites of trading posts along the river. Her readers will think of other phases of Western history which deserve more adequate attention. Within reach of her favourite South Branch, Mrs. Campbell could have found traces of Old World customs in Mennonite, Doukhobor and Ukrainian communities. Near grain elevators and stock-yards, at the doors of churches and schools she might have heard interesting talk of farmer's organizations and of politics. But of co-operatives and political experiments she has nothing to tell us. Finally, in "Waterway," Mrs. Campbell recounts with zest the absurd efforts of Hatfield, "the California rain-making wizard" to make Canadian skies "weep at will!" Then briefly she reveals prairie visions of the irrigation schemes of the future.

Errors of fact and interpretation creep inevitably into a book of this kind. Occasionally a date may be challenged, such as that of Kelsey's first visit to the Saskatchewan (p. 19). Sometimes the author unwittingly reveals her unfamiliarity with terms relating to the Indians and the fur trade. Perhaps we should not expect a novice in this field to know the meaning of Assiniboine (p. 19) and coat beaver (p. 36), to be accurate about 18th century fashions in felt hats (p. 36), or to understand the construction of tipis and travois (p. 211), or the name of bull boats (p. 28). It is difficult to believe, though, that a Canadian needed to be informed by her artist friends about the color of an Indian's skin (p. 211). At times Mrs. Campbell sacrifices accuracy of fact to the dramatic recital of stories about the selection, for example, of a site for the University of Saskatchewan (pp. 322-25).

With the exception of the part called "Hiatus," Mrs. Campbell has succeeded in organizing her material in a way which is more satisfactory than that achieved by Mr. MacGregor. She uses a style which is colloquial, yet marred by careless sentence structure and the repetition of phrases such as "a lot of" and words like "opine." Mr. MacGregor's style lacks polish too, and occasionally it is florid. The appearance of Mrs. Campbell's book is much enhanced by the delight-

ful illustrations done by Illingworth H. Kerr, the head of the Art Department in the Institute of Technology in Calgary. Mr. Kerr comes from Lumsden and has travelled along both branches of the river on hunting and sketching trips. He also did an end map which, it must be confessed, is more decorative than useful. Readers of *The Saskatchewan* will frequently wish to consult maps of the kind which Mr. MacGregor has provided for *Blankets and Beads*.

In the opinion of this reviewer, neither one of these books makes a significant contribution to Western history. Both, however, possess popular appeal. Those who wish a brief and relatively accurate introduction to the history of the fur trade will like *Blankets and Beads*. Those who seek an entertaining narrative will turn to *The Saskatchewan* for their summer reading.

JEAN E. MURRAY

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THE THIRD FORCE IN CANADA: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, 1932-48, By Dean E. McHenry. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1950. Pp. viii, 351. \$4.00.

THAT an American should produce the first objective description of the CCF party may seem anomalous, until one remembers that Canadian scholars have not yet recorded the history of Canada's much older parties, the Liberal and Conservative. Professor McHenry's book—he is a prolific writer—is the second of three studies of left-wing parties in the British Commonwealth; the first, dealing with the British Labour Party, was published several years ago; the third, on New Zealand, is now in preparation. Like Professor McHenry's other writings, his study of the CCF is thorough and comprehensive, with a fine regard for minutiae, and for the most part pedestrian and even dull.

Part of the dullness comes from his style, for he writes a prose that is repetitive and adorned with time-honoured phrases. He is not above adapting words to new uses, for he employs 'travel' as an adjective, and refers to some internal need of the CCF as a demand for 'restructuralization.' But in fairness to Professor McHenry, who is in truth a competent scholar, it must be emphasized that his book deals with a remarkably dull subject. I do not say this as a criticism of the CCF; it is simply a demonstrable fact that the CCF is as drab and respectable a group of revolutionaries as the world has ever seen. Speaking of its annual conventions, Professor McHenry observes: "Real thought and effort ought to be given to arousing enthusiasm among delegates and visitors . . . Even a church appeals to its people in part through community singing, organ music, and ritual. Where are the songs of the socialist movement, the music of Canada and the old country, the orators under whose spell thousands plunge into a campaign?"

Where indeed? Professor McHenry's book stresses on almost every page the earnestness and sincerity of the CCF workers. Beginning with a sketchy survey of the party's antecedents, the book discusses the party's organization on both national and local levels; its friends, foes, and election prospects; its extraordinarily conscientious and able group of M.P.'s; its experiments in Saskatchewan; and its general policy. In all these chapters, the attention to detail is

impressive, and I venture to say that almost any fact one wanted to know about the CCF, from the month in which the British Columbia party holds its annual convention to the number of votes polled for and against the CCF in the last election in Nova Scotia, could be found in these pages.

Professor McHenry saves for his concluding chapter most of his own ideas about the CCF. The party is unique, he thinks, in its attempts to reconcile farm and labour support in a single movement and its attempts to apply socialistic ideas to a rugged North American economy. The pursuit of these goals has obliged the party to make certain original contributions to social theory and practice. The party's main assets, he thinks, consist primarily of its highly democratic organization, its competent leadership, and its good record; its liabilities depend on its chronic shortage of funds, its failure to establish a national organization with a mass following, and the general world situation which makes voters unwilling to experiment with a party of protest and discontent. Many of these liabilities, Professor McHenry seems to think, can be abolished by the CCF itself, which must brighten up. "The party," he says, "badly needs to learn to utilize such fields of expression as motion pictures, drama, dance and music. The time has come for a bit of Barnum with social significance." Perhaps the quotation will mean less to residents of Saskatchewan than to other Canadians.

Professor McHenry's book is a worthwhile contribution to the literature of Canadian politics and political history and I suspect that in the long run it will be of greater value to the CCF's opponents than to its friends. The CCF's friends are already zealots, and few parties can boast so large a proportion of devoted and unselfish leaders. The CCF's foes it is clear from this book (although the author does not say so) have not yet fully comprehended that the CCF will never be beaten by mere name-calling, or by the adoption of only a selected few of the many planks in the party's platform.

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NORMAN WARD

THE HISTORY OF HAWARDEN AND COMMUNITY: Compiled and published by the Homemakers' Club of Hawarden. 1939. Pp. 32, illus. \$3.00.

THIS little booklet will be enjoyed by all those who know Hawarden today or who have known it in years gone by. It should also provide profitable reading for everyone interested in the history of Saskatchewan as a whole, since the story of Hawarden is the story of a typical prairie community. Like many pioneer histories, it emphasizes "first things." The story begins with an account of the arrival in the district of the first settlers, and enumerates the names of the owners and the dates of establishment of the first stores and businesses. It tells about the first mail service, the first village council, the building of the first railway station and grain elevators, the appearance of the first engines, cars and combines in Hawarden, and the installation of the first electric light system. It describes the changes in farming methods and crop conditions over the years. In the outline of the history of the district churches and schools, one notes that a decline in the rural population has necessitated the closing of three schools since 1941. The

final chapter is devoted to the recreational life of the community, mentioning briefly the various clubs and societies and the agricultural fairs, formerly yearly events, and bringing the story of Hawarden up to date with a description of the building of the Memorial Rink, a community project which was completed in December, 1948.

The history is illustrated with numerous interesting and on the whole well-labelled photographs. One wishes that the Christian names, or the initials, of the people mentioned in the story were more generally given.

CHRISTINE MACDONALD

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CFQC SASKATOON, 1923-1949. Saskatoon, 1949, Pp. 44, illus.

**T**HIRTY years ago, a few eager amateurs in Saskatoon, as in many other places, tinkered happily building weird contraptions called crystal sets. Heaven was reached when the crude ear-phones brought in more or less decipherable sounds from afar. For such fans the chance to say to envious competitors, "I got Denver last night," was bliss unalloyed, especially if they believed him.

To these men, the news that a radio station was to be established in Saskatoon came as good tidings. Two men, business partners, D. F. Streb and A. A. Murphy, with an eye to increasing their sales of electric equipment, determined to build, and with admirable promptitude, made the necessary arrangements for a 50 Watt transmitter. By July, 1923, the station was in operation.

The development from the first modest plant housed in a small wooden shack, to the present 5000 Watt station, is fully described in an admirable brochure published by CFQC. The booklet is attractive in format, well printed and illustrated in black and white, with one very good colour picture of the main studio.

The story is well-told, following a strict chronological sequence without undue stressing of unimportant detail or a wearisome procession of statistics. Here are recorded the risks, the minor disasters from storm and mechanical breakdowns, the cut-throat, unintelligent competition when no less than three other stations were cluttering up the air-waves in Saskatoon. The rivals soon passed out of the picture and slowly but steadily mechanical improvements both in transmission and reception encouraged CFQC owners to invest more and more capital in bringing the plant up to the best standard.

It is pleasant to note that the history of this important community enterprise has been so carefully set down. Credit is due to the compilers and to their printers.

J. S. Wood

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25 YEARS WITH THE SASKATCHEWAN WHEAT POOL, [28pp.], is the title of a recent pamphlet published by the Saskatchewan Co-operative Producers Ltd., Regina. It presents a brief popular outline of the history and economic philosophy of the Wheat Pool, and includes a number of excellent illustrations.

## Notes and Correspondence

### "WHAT DID SASKATCHEWAN PIONEERS EAT?"

THE editorial committee would welcome correspondence from any reader of *Saskatchewan History* describing the food which was available at various periods, also information on cooking methods, prices, types of packaging and sources of supply. This material will be used in a forthcoming article on the history of diet on the prairies.

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Rev. David L. Greene of All Saints' Church, Duck Lake, in referring to the article on Henry Kelsey in the autumn 1949 issue of *Saskatchewan History*, points out that a monument to this explorer has been erected at The Pas, Manitoba by the National Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

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Mr. C. Evans Sargent of Eyre, whose reminiscences appear elsewhere in this issue, has the following comments on the article "School District Names" in Volume III, No. 1 of *Saskatchewan History*:

In the list as printed the main point in the origin of the name of the Ranchview School District is missed. It should read "The Dip" rather than "spot cattle in the dip." "The Dip" was the first place name in this whole area, and was given to a remarkable spring, subsequently tested by surveyors for the Pearce Irrigation Project after World War I to run 2,500 gallons per minute. In the early days before the sod-buster encroached on the domain of the rancher, this was used by all the big ranchers. Large dipping vats were constructed in which the herds were treated with disinfectants to protect them against flies and warbles. "The Dip" was a definite place name long before there was a thought of Alsask, which originated about 1910.

Mr. Sargent's letter also contains a valuable compilation of place name data for his district which will be published in a later issue of this magazine.

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We have received a communication from Mr. Allan Turner, a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan now studying at the University of Toronto. Part of Mr. Turner's letter deals with the early history of Weyburn and district:

In the course of reading Toronto newspapers of the first decade of this century, one frequently comes across editorials, special features, and correspondence dealing with the progress of settlement, crop prospects, and settlers' needs in Manitoba and the North-West. *The Globe* is especially rewarding in this respect since from time to time it sent out one of its staff to acquire first-hand information. On June 20, 1902, it carried a lengthy despatch reporting on early settlement along the "Soo" Line, some of the details of which may be of interest to readers of *Saskatchewan History*.

The correspondent pointed out that lands adjacent to the railway from Portal to Pasqua had been untenanted until 1898. An early attempt at settlement had come at Estevan but the drought of 1893 drove out the settlers and the area was shunned for five years. Then the "Soo" tract was "re-discovered" in 1898 by people from Indian Head who made an exploratory trip in that direction. They found excellent land in the vicinity of the siding at Weyburn and returned in 1899 to settle permanently. These people had originally come from Grey, Simcoe, and Hastings counties in Ontario . . .

The country proceeded to open up rapidly after this start and the correspondent reported that 110 farm homes could be seen with the naked eye from the elevation south of the town of Weyburn, which by 1902 had some 250 residents . . . The big stone school on the hill overlooking the town was of special interest. The first crop at Weyburn (1900) was an almost total failure through drought. However, the people refused to accept the failure as evidence that the district was too arid for cultivation. "Instead, they hung on tooth and nail and petitioned for the erection of a school to be built of the granite boulders along the creek and on the adjoining slopes. Somewhat to their surprise, the request was granted. The settlers hauled the stone, which they gathered with great exertion, and so made a little ready cash and secured one of the few solid stone schools in the Territories."

The crop of 1901 proved to be a "bumper" one and was followed by a rush of American settlers. The correspondent believed that an initial impetus to American settlement came through passengers en route to Alberta over the "Soo" Line who saw the new farms and began to make enquiries. Speculators began to buy up land and Schwab and Company of Clear Lake, Minnesota, were reported to have 250,000 acres north and east of Weyburn which they were advertising in the United States as "land with no stones, no stumps, no drouth, good water, cheap coal, and good railways." The correspondent commented: "The booklet is a trifle too positive on the drouth question, but it is a pleasure to see Americans distributing pamphlets to prove that Canada is the finest country out of doors, and we need not quarrel over a few showers of rain."

*The Globe* correspondent was much impressed by the quality of the new American settlers. Some of them were capitalists "who can laugh at a season or two of drouth." One Iowa man bought 3000 acres of land and moved in nine carloads of stock, implements, and furniture! This was an extreme case but an average of four to five thousand dollars in cash and equipment was not thought to be excessive among these settlers. The Americans brought some innovations in farming methods. One of these was "steam ploughing", with a traction engine utilized to pull two "three-furrow" ploughs. Another practice was to follow the "Dakota example" of sowing flax as the first crop, which, sold for seed, frequently paid for the land in the first year.

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Mrs. Mary Weekes, commenting on the review of her book *Trader King* in the last issue of *Saskatchewan History*, points out that Mr. King's advanced age and frail condition at the time of her interviews, made it impossible to follow up all of his allusions to events which were not directly connected with his own activities.

## Contributors

BLAIR NEATBY was employed during the summer of 1949 in arranging the records of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission in the Archives of Saskatchewan. He is a graduate ('50) of the University of Saskatchewan, where he was awarded High Honours in History and the Governor-General's Gold Medal.

MARGARET MESSER is a teacher at Balfour Technical School, Regina.

BRUCE PEEL is in charge of the Shortt Library of Canadiana in the University Library, Saskatoon.

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CHRISTINE MACDONALD is on the staff of the Legislative Library, Regina.

J. S. WOOD is Chief Librarian of the Public Library, Saskatoon.

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### *Editorial Note:*

The editorial committee will welcome comments on this issue and suggestions for the future. Articles and illustrations suitable for publication are desired, but contributors should consult the editor before submitting material.

### NOTICE

Many of the articles which appear in *Saskatchewan History* are based on documents in the Office of the Saskatchewan Archives, University of Saskatchewan, and in the archives collection relating to Regina and district which is maintained in the Legislative Library. The Provincial Archivist is anxious to augment both these collections with letters, diaries, reminiscences, photographs, and records of all types of organizations and businesses. Readers of this magazine are urged to communicate with the Provincial Archivist if they possess or know the whereabouts of materials which may be donated, or borrowed for microfilming.

